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The Letters of Algernon Charles Swinburne

Edited by
Edmund Gosse, C.B.
and
Thomas James Wise

Vol. I

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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Swinburne, Algernon
Charles, 1837-1909.
The letters of Algernon
Charles Swinburne /
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INTRODUCTION

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE was born on the 5th of April, 1837, and died on the 10th of April, 1909.

Mr. Heinemann, having acquired the copyright in the entire writings of Swinburne, has entrusted to us the task of making a first collection of the poet's letters. The Correspondence of an eminent author is bound to be given to the public in successive stages, and in the last resource is condemned to imperfection. No collection of the Complete Letters of a writer is likely ever to be published. Those of Cowper and of Johnson have occupied the closest attention of the learned for more than a hundred years, yet additions to them are for ever turning up. The case of Charles Lamb, that enchanting letter-writer, is in point. Talfourd produced in 1837 a slender first collection, which was presently extended by himself, and then successively by Fitzgerald, by Hazlitt, and by Ainger, nor can it be certain that even Mr.

Lucas's edition will never undergo enlargement. It must be borne in mind by the reader of the ensuing volumes that we make no pretence of presenting the "complete" correspondence of Swinburne, of which much must at present remain unknown even to ourselves. We are, in fact, aware of the existence of more than one group of letters, an inspection of which is still denied to the general public.

What we are able to give is, however, and will probably remain, a very considerable portion of Swinburne's Correspondence, for three reasons: the first, that no one, except his Mother, appears to have kept his early letters, so far at least as we have hitherto been able to discover; the second, that a good deal of what must have been very familiar and interesting has, as we have learned on inquiry, been destroyed; the third, that in comparison with most recent authors of great eminence Swinburne wrote few letters. He experienced, as I have explained elsewhere, a physical difficulty in the exercise of penmanship, and yet even during the closing years of his life he refrained from availing himself of the services of a secretary. The bare idea of Swinburne's using a type-writing machine brings a smile to the lips of any one who recollects his capitulation at the approach of any species of mechanism.

The whole of his compositions, transcripts for the press as well as drafts, and his private

letters to the end, are holograph. Yet the act of holding a pen was cumbrous to him, and he avoided it as often as he could, never, or scarcely ever, copying his own poems, and preferring the risk of losing his MSS. in the post to the labour of making a duplicate. A letter, therefore, represented a toilsome act to him, and it was one which he did not face without a strong impulsion.

With him there can be no question that the strongest impulsion came from literature, and mainly from poetical literature. It is therefore not surprising that questions of metrical technique and of the history of verse recur incessantly in Swinburne's correspondence, as they did in his conversation. He lived in a perpetual converse with the Muses, and *ubi Thesaurus ibi Cor*, as Coleridge wished his own epitaph to confess. But the treasure-heap over which Swinburne's heart loved most to gloat was that formed by the almost innumerable quarto plays of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. These are discussed in his correspondence with a gusto which surpasses anything which Charles Lamb himself could show, and which reflects the obsession of his everyday talk, in the course of which he seldom refrained for any length of time from an allusion to *Arden of Feversham* or some such tragic drama. It will be observed that this part of Swinburne's correspondence has

a surprising unity of method. The eye of the illustrious enthusiast is fixed throughout upon his subject, and it moves away to no other. It might have been thought impossible to deal with matters so technical without a touch of pedantry, yet here is nothing that smells of the lamp. We have a scholar talking to some other scholar of things intimately seductive to them both, and he does it with what is almost the ardour of a schoolboy.

The revelation is moral as well as intellectual, for no one can attentively read these letters without seeing shine out of them the courtesy, the generosity, the delicate glow of friendship, which were characteristic of this noble poet. Swinburne's extraordinary devotion to the minor dramatists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dates from his schoolboy days. Once, when he was looking over my bookshelves, he took down a copy of Lamb's *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets*, and, turning to me, said, "that book taught me more than any other in the world—that and the Bible!" The original edition (1808) of this great work does not, however, present the extracts from the lesser and obscurer dramatists. When Swinburne writes, in one of the ensuing letters, that Charles Lamb "made *Tottenham Court* familiar to me ever since my thirteenth year," he proves that it was not the *Specimens* in their original form which he

studied. In 1827 Lamb had contributed to Hone's *Table-Book* the extracts from the Garrick Plays which were Swinburne's peculiar delight. Here, and here alone, in his Eton days, could Nabbes, Davenport, Yarington, *Arden of Feversham* and *Doctor Dodypol* be discovered. But Hone's *Table-Book* was an ephemeral affair, and it was not until after Lamb's death that, in 1835, the Garrick Extracts became accessible in the pretty edition in which Moxon appended them to his reprint of the *Specimens*.

It may be taken for granted that it was this two-volume edition which came into Swinburne's hands in his thirteenth year, that is, 1849–50. He induced his mother to buy for him Dyce's edition of the works of Marlowe when it was quite a new book; and this was published in 1850. There is no doubt that he was strictly correct when he attributed to himself a love and some budding knowledge of the rarer Elizabethans at the extremely precocious age of thirteen. In order to facilitate the reading of these letters to those who are not quite so conversant with the small spinosities of Elizabethan bibliography as were the poet and his correspondents, we have occasionally added a few brief notes at the foot of the text.

Swinburne's correspondence with French and Italian contemporaries must have been considerable, and would certainly have great value in the

comprehension of his republican poetry. We have made great efforts to trace his letters to Mazzini, but without success. We do not, however, despair; these may turn up when they are least expected, and we know that they are still being searched for. They may reward the patience of some deserving editor when we are dead and gone, and I can hardly wish him a greater piece of good fortune, since I am convinced that as the magnanimity of Swinburne to Hugo inspired him with a noble eloquence, so he poured out to Mazzini, as to a father confessor, the very innermost convictions of his soul.

Of his foreign correspondence, one very interesting and important section will be found here in the letters to Stéphane Mallarmé. The daughter of that poet, Madame Bonniot, generously consented to search for me among the confusion of papers at Valvins, and it is to her kindness that we owe the letters written by Swinburne to Mallarmé in 1875 and 1876. It will not be overlooked that they present valuable evidence of the English poet's competence in the use of the French language, both in prose and verse. One of them, as will be seen, was modified by Mallarmé when he printed it in *La République des Lettres*, but so slightly as to emphasize its general correctness. All are given here exactly as Swinburne wrote them. The letters of Mallarmé to which these are replies

have disappeared, and were probably destroyed. But even if they were found, they could not be published, as Mallarmé left stringent directions that no letter of his, of whatever kind, was to be printed after his death, and this wish is rigidly confirmed by his executors.

The tone of admiration in which Swinburne writes to Mallarmé will not fail to attract the reader's attention. It is remarkable, because in 1875 the author of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* was still but little recognised in France, and his very name was totally unknown in England. It was the English poet's warm approval of the Frenchman's translation of Poe which started the esteem. Swinburne can, at that time, have seen very little of Mallarmé's original work. But he was acquainted with *Le Parnasse Contemporain* of 1866, and with the *Second Parnasse* of 1869; each of these contained lyrics by Mallarmé the merit of which Swinburne, with his rapid and faultless perception, did not fail to recognise. He had seen "Le phénomène futur," and it is within my personal memory that, in *Le Tombeau de Théophile Gautier*—a book in which Swinburne took an almost feverish interest—he particularly observed the mysterious merit of "Toast Funèbre."

It must not, however, be gathered that Swinburne accepted, or comprehended, the obstinate and intricate theories of Mallarmé regarding poetic art. I do not recollect, in later years,

that he occupied himself much, or at all, with the development of Symbolism. His sentiment towards Mallarmé was one of delicate and courteous sympathy with a man whom he felt to be an artist to the tips of his fingers, and who recommended himself to him through the friendship of Manet, Whistler, and Fantin, the enthusiasm of Théodore de Banville and Catulle Mendès, and the imperial complaisance of Victor Hugo.

Perhaps I may be excused a word of explanation regarding the abrupt change of tone between the first and the second of those ensuing letters which are addressed to myself. It represents, alas ! a loss of material which I can never cease to deplore. When I wrote to Swinburne in 1867 I was in my eighteenth year, and had but lately left school, while he was in his thirty-first year, and was surrounded by the splendour and scandal of his then recent *Poems and Ballads*. Remote from all literary society and supported by no private sympathy, I was living a feverish and absurd existence, infatuated with poetry and with the desire to excel in the writing of verses ; torn between the claims of a dying puritanism and those of a vaguely invading paganism. In this unhealthy mood, I ventured to send some of my painful compositions to the poet who had lately flooded our horizon with radiance. It was the first time that I inflicted such an indiscretion

on a stranger, and it was to be the last. The result of receiving Swinburne's wise and straightforward reply was that I burned all that I had written, and set about a new and more sober study of the great masters of our literature.

But it was not until three years later, at the close of 1870, that I made the poet's personal acquaintance, and it was in the beginning of 1871 that we began to be friends. This relation ripened into a close intimacy at the opening of 1873, and from that time forward our intercourse was frequent and confidential. I saw him very often indeed, and when he was absent from London we wrote to one another. There was a bundle of letters, dating from 1871 to the end of 1873, which would naturally have contributed passages of critical interest and biographical importance to the present collection, but unhappily it is lost. In the course of a change of lodgings in 1874 a desk of papers disappeared, and with it all the letters which I had received from Swinburne since our friendship began. This is the reason why, after the stiffness of an opening reply to an unknown aspirant, the reader is plunged into the midst of a familiar friendship.

The extreme simplicity of Swinburne's nature is revealed in all his personal correspondence. Not a letter here, except those which were addressed to Edmund C. Stedman with a definite purpose, shows any consciousness of a possible

"general public." They are absolutely unaffected responses to the appeals of private friends. Scarcely any references to events of passing history are to be found in these letters; Swinburne left these to the newspapers, he was absorbed in other matters. It is said that Scaliger, who was transcribing a Hebrew manuscript in the heart of Paris, lived through the day of St. Bartholomew without observing that anybody was being massacred in the street below his window. A similar story records that Archimedes could not be drawn from his mathematical reflections by the noises of the sack of Syracuse. Our poet was capable of an abstracted application which was not surpassed by either of these historical instances.

Our sincere thanks are due to all those many friends who have courteously permitted us to transcribe the letters in their possession. Among them a foremost place is due to Lord Morley, who has been so gracious as to offer me access to the whole of such letters from the poet as he had preserved, and to give me his counsel in my selection from them. Our thanks for special help from the Marquess of Crewe, and from Sir George Otto Trevelyan, which I have already acknowledged in my *Life of Swinburne*, we take this opportunity of gratefully repeating.

EDMUND GOSSE.

LETTER I

To Edwin Hatch[1]

Oxford.
February 17th, [1858].

My dear Hatch,

I commiserate you sincerely; but I have two things to comfort you with:—(1) Morris's book is really out. Reading it, I would fain be worthy to sit down at his feet; but I have a painful recollection of *Aurora Leigh:*

> *Almost all the birds*
> *Will sing at dawn; and yet we do not take*
> *The chattering swallow for the holy lark!*

Such, however, is the invincible absurdity of all poets, that he ventured to prefer *Rosamond*[2] to *Peter Harpdon*[3] in a repeatedly rebuked and resolutely argued statement. It appears to me

[1] Edwin Hatch (1835–1889), afterwards a distinguished theologian, had just been appointed to an East End curacy.

[2] Not *Rosamond*, the second of the two dramas in Swinburne's volume of 1860, but an earlier play which is still unprinted.

[3] *Sir Peter Harpdon's End*, by William Morris. Printed in *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, 1858, pp. 65–109.

simple mania ; but certainly I am glad of his words, for *Rosamond* is about my favourite poem, and is now verging on a satisfactory completion. The first scene as rewritten is an acknowledged improvement. But after all——!

(2) I have a message to you from Edith,[1] which I enclose in her own words. Of course if you like I will write for your book, and she can get another copy ; you must not let her interfere between you and what you value. She would be in a great state of mind at the idea.

Now (to have done with the practical at once) could you tell me if about Easter I could find a day's lodging near you if I came up ? I should love to see all you speak of, and also to talk with you sooner than otherwise. This is a vague vision, and certainly *cool* on my part to give you the trouble ; but we might make something of it.

In redemption of my words, I enclose two of my latest grinds, regardless of postage. Lose not the priceless uniques lest the world demand the account thereof at your hands. *The Golden House* is of course *Rudel in Paradise*. The other I can only describe as a dramato-lyrico-phantasmagorico-spasmodic sermon on the grievous sin of flirtation. It was written off one evening and has never been corrected. Verdicts differ

[1] Miss Edith Burden, sister of Miss Jane Burden ; she afterwards became Mrs. William Morris.

concerning it. Morris attacks it as weak and spasmodic. Nichol (in whose opinion I often trust) thinks it rather a good dramatic story than otherwise. It is of course meant for a picture of exceptional weakness; inaction of the man, impulsive irresolution of the woman; mutual ignorance of each other and themselves, with an extra dash of sensuous impulse; finally, with no ostensible cause, rupture and spiflication. Pray abuse it if you feel inclined; I am not (as you know) over-delicate and timid concerning my scribbles, and I have no tenderness for this; and if it is not what it ought to be, it is a decided failure. But I suspect I must be *Eglamor* to Morris as *Sordello.*

I long to be with you by firelight between the sunset and the sea to have talk of *Sordello;* it is one of my canonical scriptures. Does he sleep and forget? I think yes. Did the first time Palma's mouth trembled to touch his in the golden rose-lands of Paradise, a sudden power of angelic action come over him? I suspect, not utterly companionless. Sometimes one knows —not now: but I suppose he slept years off before she kissed him. In Heaven she grew too tired and thin to sing well, and her face grew whiter than its aureole with pain and want of him. And if, like the other Saint, she wept, the tears fell upon his shut lids and fretted the eyes apart as they trickled. Who knows these

matters? Only we keep the honey-stain of hair.

I write more folly to you than I dare read over, because I think you wise. So take my stupidity as a compliment. If you like, and if it prospers, I will send you specimens of a new poem on Tristram which I am about. I envy you your work of corrupting the young idea with Shelley. I hope you will also introduce Morris—the first edition *must* pay well. If you like or care to amuse yourself therewith, my poems are at your service. I don't care about privacy. I shudder at the idea of a young man in the sixth form being tainted by such reading as Shelley, Morris, and the unworthiest of their admirers. I should like to review myself and say "that I have an abortive covetousness of imitation in which an exaggeration of my models — *i. e.* blasphemy and sensuality—is happily neutralised by my own imbecility." I flatter myself the last sentence was worthy of the *Saturday Review*. I also envy your musical and architectural work. Upon the whole, if your pupils in poetry and profanity are conversible, I think that one might be worse off than you. I am sure, but for Morris, I should be.

One evening — when the *Union* was just finished — Jones and I had a great talk. [Spencer] Stanhope and Swan attacked, and we

defended, our idea of Heaven, viz. a rose-garden full of stunners. Atrocities of an appalling nature were uttered on the other side. We became so fierce that two respectable members of the University—entering to see the pictures—stood mute and looked at us. We spoke just then of kisses in Paradise, and expounded our ideas on the celestial development of that necessity of life; and after listening five minutes to our language, they literally fled from the room! Conceive our mutual ecstasy of delight.

All my people desire to be remembered to you. I had a long letter from Edith the other day: I know you will be glad to hear this, as I am to think of Morris's having that wonderful and most perfect stunner of his to—look at or speak to. The idea of his marrying her is insane. To kiss her feet is the utmost man should dream of doing.

Mind you send for his book at once; read it, and repent your former heresies, or I will review it somewhere and say that he is to Tennyson what Tennyson is to Dobell or Dobell to Tupper.

Believe me, ever yours truly,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

P.S.—Morris sends his love to you and hopes you are getting settled. *The Albigenses* are not yet organised; I must read more, and then dash at it in wrath.

LETTER II

To Edwin Hatch

Oxford.
April 26th, [1858].

My dear Hatch,

I am very sorry to have missed seeing you, before you left us for the improving recreation of canes and chemistry, Gregorians and castigation. I trust you will some day have had enough, and set up the staff of your tent even among Philistines to whom the penetralia of *Chambers's Magazine* are unknown land.

Have you yet seen Montégut's article on Kingsley in the *Revue des Deux Mondes?* Get it up when you have time, it is well worth while.

Item: a review of *Guenevere* in *The Tablet*—I believe by Pollen, certainly the best as well as most favourable review Morris has had. That party has given us no signs of life as yet; in vain has the *Oxford County Chronicle* been crammed with such notices as the following:

"If W. M. will return to his disconsolate friends, all shall be forgiven. One word would relieve them from the most agonising anxiety—why is it withheld?"

"If the Gentleman who left an MS. (apparently in verse) in George St. will communicate

with his bereaved and despairing Publishers, he will hear of something to his advantage. Otherwise the MS. will be sold (to pay expenses) as waste paper, together with the stock in hand of a late volume of Poems which fell stillborn from the press."

Even this latter—a touching effusion of the creative fancy and talented pen "which now traces these imperfect records with a faltering hand"—has failed to move him. The town-crier is to proclaim our loss to-morrow: "Lost, stolen, or strayed, an eminent artist and promising littérateur. (The description of his person is omitted for obvious reasons.) Had on when he was last seen the clothes of another gentleman, much worn, of which he had possessed himself in a fit of moral—and physical—abstraction. Linen (questionable) marked W. M. Swears awfully, and walks with a rolling gait, as if partially intoxicated."

Enough of so painful a subject. I hope you are not breaking your brains upon *Sordello*. Read the other poets now alive (whom it would be invidious to particularise too minutely) and you will outgrow your absurd veneration for "an author of some talent, but more extravagance"—vide *Saturday Review*, Art. *Men and Women*.

I shall be busy till Whitsuntide, so this elegant epistle is my last for some time.

Receive the assurance of my respectful consideration, and believe me

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER III

To RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES
(Afterwards Lord Houghton)

16, *Grafton Street,*
Fitzroy Square.
October 15th, 1860.

MY DEAR MR. MILNES,

I send you to-morrow, as you wished, my article on Wells's *Joseph and his Brethren*, which has been some time doing, but I wanted to make it as satisfactory as I could without transcribing half the book. It is still finer, I think, than it seemed in my recollection of it after the first reading, and I should be very glad if I had anything to do with helping it to a little of the credit it must gain in the end. I have consulted with Rossetti about the choice of extracts. How on earth a copy could now be got, I can't think. I was driven to the dolorous expedient of hunting up the British Museum copy (entered in the wildest way in that slough of a catalogue) so as to collate it with a MS. copy sent to Rossetti by the author.

I ought to have thanked you before both for my parcel which came on safely to me at the Trevelyans', and for the invitation you sent me from Lady de Grey ; I had a very nice week with them.

Since I came back to London about a fortnight since, I have done some more work to *Chastelard*, and rubbed up one or two other things. My friend George Meredith has asked me to send some to *Once a Week*, which valuable publication he props up occasionally with fragments of his own. Rossetti has just done a drawing of a female model and myself embracing—I need not say in the most fervent and abandoned style—meant for a frontispiece to his Italian Translations.[1] Everybody who knows me already salutes the likeness with a yell of recognition. When the book comes out, I shall have no refuge but the grave.

I would also have kept another promise, and send you my *De la Touche*, but until I know it will go straight to your hands I dare not trust *La Reine d'Espagne* out of my sight. Reserving always your corresponding promise that I am yet to live and look upon the mystic pages of the martyred Marquis de Sade, ever since which

[1] *The Early Italian Poets, Translated by D. G. Rossetti.* 8vo, 1861. The "drawing" in question, though duly engraved upon wood, was not ultimately employed for the purpose for which it had been prepared.

the vision of that illustrious and ill-requited benefactor of humanity has hovered by night before my eyes.

With best remembrances to Mrs. Milnes,
I remain, yours most sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER IV

To PAULINA, LADY TREVELYAN

Maison Laurenti,
Mentone.
January 19th, [1861].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN,

(Which a nice place it is to date from!)

Many thanks for your letter, which a comfortable letter it was, but creates violent wishes to get back to England. For of *all the beasts* of countries I ever see, I reckon this about caps them. I also strongly notion that there ain't a hole in St. Giles's which isn't a paradise to this. How any professing Christian as has been in France and England can look at it, passes me. It is more like the landscape in Browning's *Childe Roland* than anything I ever heard tell on. A calcined, scalped, rasped, scraped, flayed, broiled, powdered, leprous, blotched, mangy, grimy, parboiled country *with-*

out trees, water, grass, fields—*with* blank, beastly, senseless olives and orange-trees like a mad cabbage gone indigestible ; it is infinitely liker hell than earth, and one looks for tails among the people. And such females with hunched bodies and crooked necks carrying tons on their heads, and looking like Death taken seasick. Ar-r-r-r-r ! Gr-r-r-rn !

Wal, I feel kind of better after that. But the aggravation of having people about one who undertake to admire these big stone-heaps of hills and hideous split-jawed gorges ! I must say (in Carlylese) that "the (scenery) is of the sort which must be called, *not* in the way of profane swearing, but of grave, earnest and sorrowing indignation, the d—— sort." (I wd. rather die than write it at length.)

I am very glad you like my book[1] ; if it will do anything like sell I shall publish my shorter poems soon. They are quite ready. I have done a lot of work since I saw you. Rossetti says some of my best pieces : one on St. Dorothy and Theophilus (I wanted to try my heathen hands at a Christian subject, you comprehend, and give a pat to the Papist interest) ; also a long one out of Boccaccio,[2] that was begun ages ago and let drop. Item many songs and ballads. I am trying to write prose, which

[1] *The Queen-Mother and Rosamund*, 1860.
[2] *The Two Dreams*, originally entitled *The White Hind.*

is very hard, but I want to make a few stories each about three or six pages long. Likewise a big one about my blessedest pet which her initials is Lucrezia Estense Borgia. Which soon I hope to see her hair as is kep at Milan "in spirits in a bottle."

Which puts me in mind of a favour I want to ask you. In the beginning (probably) of Feb. I am going to Venice and through all the chief towns I can, and perhaps to Florence *if* I could find out whether Mr. Browning is there. Now there is nobody within reach who knows as much of art as a decently educated cockroach; and I want you to have the extreme goodness to tell me what to go to and how to see Venice—buildings especially as well as pictures—before it gets bombarded—out of the British tourist's fashion. If you are not awfully busy wd you write me a letter wh: I cd get say by the week after next? considering I have read no books and am not content with the British Murray.

I wish I *had* anything to do besides my proper work if I can't live by it. Which it's very well to pitch into a party like brother Stockdolloger, but what *is* one to do? I can't go to the bar: and much good I shd do if I did. You know there is really no profession one can take up with and go on working. Item—boetry is quite work enough for any one man. Item—who is there that is anything

besides a poet at this day except Hugo? And though his politics is excellent and his opinions is sound, he does much better when he sticks to his work and makes Ratbert and Ruy Blas. *I* don't want to sit in [a] room and write, gracious knows. Do you think a small thing in the stump-orator line wd do? or a Grace-Walker? Seriously what is there you wd have one take to? It's a very good lecture but it is not practical. Nor yet it ain't fair. It's bage.

Have you heard the report that old Landor is going to republish *all* his suppressed libels in verse and prose and more new ones? Isn't he a marvel of heaven's making? I suppose a British public will bust at once if it's nipped and frizzled and churned up to an etarnal smash any more: which by the by America seems to be at this writing.

I am in love with Paris—you know I never saw it before. What a stunner above stunners that Giorgione party with the music in the grass and the water-drawer is, that Gabriel made such a sonnet on. Then that Stephen preaching of Carpaccio! I never heard a word of it; but it seems to me lovely, with wonders of faces. Item the Velasquez. Item things in general. Item the little Uccello up at the top of the gallery.

My parents should no doubt send all proper messages, but are probably in bed and (let us

hope) enjoying a deep repose. For the hour is midnight. On this account I will now conclude with my duty and respects to Sir Walter; and am with a filial heart,

AL. C. SWINBURNE.

I wish to goodness you would send me out some eligible companions. I shall have to go alone to Turin. For the English here are mainly false friends. Don't you think we shall yet live to see the last Austrian emperor hung? Is Garibaldi the greatest man since Adam, or is he not?

LETTER V

To JOHN RUSKIN

22 Dorset Street.
Wednesday [February (?) 1862].

DEAR RUSKIN,

I am glad you like my little essay, and gladder to hear that you think of coming to look me up. But I do not (honestly) understand the gist of what you say about myself. What's the matter with me that I should cause you sorrow or suggest the idea of a ruin? I don't feel at all ruinous as yet. I do feel awfully old, and well may — for in April I believe I shall be twenty-five, which is "a horror to think of."

Mais— ! what have I done or said, to be likened to such terrific things ?

You speak of not being able to hope enough for me. Don't you think we had better leave hope and faith to infants, adult or ungrown ? You and I and all men will probably do and endure what we are destined for, as well as we can. I for one am quite content to know this, without any ulterior belief or conjecture. I don't want more praise and success than I deserve, more suffering and failure than I can avoid ; but I take what comes as well and as quietly as I can ; and this seems to me a man's real business and only duty. You compare my work to a temple where the lizards have supplanted the gods ; I prefer an indubitable and living lizard to a dead or doubtful god.

I recalcitrate vigorously against your opinion of " Félise," which is rather a favourite child of mine. As to the subject, I thought it clear enough, and likely to recall to most people a similar passage of experience. A young fellow is left alone with a woman rather older, whom a year since he violently loved. Meantime he has been in town, she in the country ; and in the year's lapse they have had time, he to become tired of her memory, she to fall in love with his. Surely I have expressed this plainly and "cynically" enough ! Last year I loved you, and you were puzzled, and didn't love me—

quite. This year (I perceive) you love me, and I feel puzzled, and don't love you — quite. "Sech is life," as Mrs. Gamp says; "*Deus vult;* it can't be helped." As to the flowers and hours, they rhyme naturally, being the sweetest and most transient things that exist—when they *are* sweet. And the poem, it seems to me, is not long enough to explain what it has to say.

Yours affectionately,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER VI

To Paulina, Lady Trevelyan

Fryston Hall,
Ferrybridge, Yorkshire.
December 2nd, 1862.

(Anniversary of the Treason of L. Buonaparte)

My dear Lady Trevelyan,

I am leaving here next Monday and want to know if you could have me then as you was so kyind as ax. Gabriel Rossetti is or will be at Scotus', so that haven is presumably barred. William Rossetti is here and desires to be remembered to you. I have Quaggified an eminent Saturday Reviewer who had before seen no merit in the great Sala, but is now effectually converted to The Grace-

Walking religion, wh. hitherto he allays licked. I have to run down to Sussex this week to attend my grandmother's funeral[1]; but am coming back here for a day or two at the end of the week to meet other eminent men. So this is my direction till Monday. Please let me know if I am to turn up.

With my respectful duty to all friends, *notamment* to Sir Walter and to Miss Lofft. I remain, ever yours sincerely,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER VII

To Paulina, Lady Trevelyan

Turf Hotel,
Newcastle.
Monday [*December* 1862].

My dear Lady Trevelyan,

I hope you are prepared for one thing, the natural consequence of your unnatural conduct; viz. to come and bail me out when the hated minions of oppressive law have haled me to a loathsome dungeon for inability to pay a fortnight's unlooked-for hotel expenses. Nothing on earth is likelier; and all because I relied with filial shortsightedness on that rather fallacious letter of invitation which carried me off from

[1] Charlotte, Countess of Ashburnham, died Nov. 26, 1862.

Fryston. If I had but heard in time, I should have run down to London, and come up later. As it is I see Destitution and Despair ahead of me, and have begun an epitaph in the Micawber style for my future grave in the precincts of my native County's jail.

If by any wild chance—say by offering the head waiter a post-obit, or a foreclosure, or a mortgage, or a bill payable at three months, or a Federal bond, or an African loan, or a voucher, or something equally practicable—I can stave off the period of my incarceration so as to get to Wallington on Wednesday, I shall take the train that leaves Morpeth at 2.15 and gets to Scotus's Gap[1] at 2.50. But I cannot disguise for myself, and will not for you, that this contingency is most remote. It is far more probable that posterity will appear, a weeping pilgrim, in the prison-yard of this city, to drop the tear of indignant sympathy on a humble stone affording scanty and dishonourable refuge

To
The
Nameless
Dust
of
A. C. S.

[1] Scott's Gap is the name of the station which serves Wallington.

LETTER VIII

To Lord Houghton

Albergo della Gran Brètagna.
March 4th, [1864].

My dear Lord Houghton,

I meant to write you a word two days since, and a sufficiently dolorous epistle you would have had, but luckily an equivocal and occasionally beneficent Providence intervened. With much labour I hunted out the most ancient of the demi-gods [Landor] at 93 Via della Chiesa, but (although knock-down blows were not, as you anticipated, his mode of salutation) I found him, owing I suspect to the violent weather, too much weakened and confused to realise the fact of the introduction without distress. In effect, he seemed so feeble and incompatible that I came away in a grievous state of disappointment and depression myself, fearing I was really too late. But taking heart of grace I wrote him a line of apology and explanation, saying why and how I had made up my mind to call upon him after you had furnished me with an introduction. That is, expressing (as far as was expressible) my immense admiration and reverence in the plainest and sincerest way I could manage. To which missive of mine came a note of invitation which I answered by setting

off again for his lodging. After losing myself for an hour in the Borgo S. Frediano I found it at last, and found him as alert, brilliant, and altogether delicious as I suppose others may have found him twenty years since. I cannot thank you enough for procuring me this great pleasure and exquisite satisfaction. I am seriously more obliged for this than for anything that could have been done for me. I have got the one thing I wanted with all my heart. If both or either of us die to-morrow, at least to-day he has told me that my presence here has made him happy; he said more than that—things for which of course I take no credit to myself but which are not the less pleasant to hear from such a man. There is no other man living from whom I should so much have prized any expression of acceptance or goodwill in return for my homage, for all other men as great are so much younger, that in his case one sort of reverence serves as the lining for another. My grandfather was upon the whole *mieux conservé*, but he had written no *Hellenics*. In answer to something that Mr. Landor said to-day of his own age, I reminded him of his equals and predecessors, Sophocles and Titian; he said he should not live up to the age of Sophocles—not see ninety. I don't see why he shouldn't, if he has people about him to care for him as he should be cared for. I should like to throw up

all other things on earth and devote myself to playing valet to him for the rest of his days. I would black his boots if he were *chez moi*. He has given me the shock of adoration which one feels at thirteen towards great men. I am not sure that any other emotion is so endurable and persistently delicious as that of worship, when your god is indubitable and incarnate before your eyes.

I told him, as we were talking of poems and such things, that his poems had first given me inexplicable pleasure and a sort of blind relief when I was a small fellow of twelve. My first recollection of them is *The Song of Hours* in the *Iphigenia*. Apart from their executive perfection, all those Greek poems of his always fitted on to my own way of feeling and thought infinitely more than even Tennyson's modern versions do now. I am more than ever sure that the *Hamadryad* is a purer and better piece of work, from the highest point of view that art can take, than such magnificent hashes and stews of old and new with a sharp sauce of personality as *Œnone* and *Ulysses*. Not that I am disloyal to Tennyson, into whose church we were all in my time born and baptized as far back as we can remember at all. But he is not a Greek nor a heathen, and I imagine does not want to be. I greatly fear he believes it possible to be something better; an absurdity

which should be left to the Brownings and other blatant creatures begotten on the slime of the modern chaos.

If I let myself loose I shall go on giving you indirect thanks for bringing me acquainted with Landor, till time and paper fail me, and patience fails you. Even if I did so, I could hardly tell you what pleasures I have had to-day in a half-hour's intercourse with him : nor what delicious things he said in recognition of my half-expressed gratitude to him. It is comfortable when one does once in a way go in for a complete quiet bit of hero-worship, and an honest interlude of relief to find it taken up instead of thrown away. And the chance of this I owe to you ; and you must simply take my thanks for granted. It is better than a publisher to me ; what more can a *rimailleur inédit* possibly say ?

I begin to remember that there are other things on the earth within the sphere of correspondence ; and that I ought to tell you how pleasant my one day's stay at Genoa was made by the note you gave me for Miss W. The other sister not only received me in that strange land with all kindness, but also put me in the way of doing what was to be done in the way of pictures—the one good office I supremely appreciate in an unknown city. I have just now come in from dining with Mr. Leader, and

write this before going to bed. He (the last-named) is going to call for me to-morrow and show me some chapel or other full of frescoes by Gozzoli. So you see if I begin to indulge in the deleterious virtue of gratitude there will be no end to my letter. Happily, when most overburdened with direct or indirect benefits, I remember the precept of a great and good man : " *La reconnaissance est une chimère vraiment méprisable. Toutes les formes de la vertu sont pour le véritable philosophe des exécrations digne de la potence de la roue ; mais celle-ci—— !* " As to the pictures here, I will add but one word : Paolo Veronese's " Martyrdom of St. Justine " seems to me painfully and ludicrously inadequate.

Yours affectionately,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER IX

To Seymour Kirkup [1]

[*Probably summer of* 1864.]

[The first sheet of this letter is lost.—Eds.]

. . . names, that the *publisher* of the biography (a very contemptible cur) took fright and would not forsooth *allow* them to be duly analysed.

[1] The Barone Seymour Kirkup (1788–1880) had been the friend of Blake. He resided almost all his life in Florence, and was a great authority on Dante. Swinburne went to see him in 1864.

He will receive chastisement, and the subject elucidation, when my commentary appears, as they both respectively deserve. Meantime I need not say how valuable any notices, or recollections, or other assistance which I might owe to your kindness would be to me. My book will at least handle the whole question of Blake's life and work with perfect fearlessness and with thorough admiration. I wish I could send you for inspection any of the engraved and coloured Books of Prophecy, but unhappily the few copies now existing fetch so many more pounds than Blake received shillings for them when alive, that only millionaires can afford to collect them, when by any rare chance they come into the market. Some of their effects in colour, notwithstanding Blake's scorn of colourists, are so exquisite and inventive that Rossetti, who in common with all great and good artists now among us admires him at his best almost beyond words, told me once that he regarded Blake as a positive discoverer of new capacities [and po]wers even in mere executive colouring.

Did you ever read his great prose-poem, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell?* For profound humour and subtle imagination, not less than for lyrical splendour and fervour of thought, it seems to me the greatest work of its century. We all envy you the privilege of having known a man so great in so many ways.

I don't know whether Rossetti has found time to answer your letter forwarded through Reade to me; I know that he received it with the greatest pleasure, and expressed to me his sense of your kindness. His pictures of this year are magnificent; they recall the greatness, the perfect beauty and luxurious power, of Titian and of Giorgione.

Excuse the length and bad penmanship of this scrawl, which I trust may not be indecipherable; and believe me, my dear Mr. Kirkup, with many thanks

Yours most sincerely,

A. C. Swinburne.

Seymour Kirkup, Esq.

LETTER X

To Lord Houghton

124, *Mount Street.*
August 6th, [1864].

Dear Lord Houghton,

If I had not been a day or two out of town you would have got this note of thanks a day or two sooner. I need not say how much I value Landor's pamphlet. I only wish it could have been then, or could be now, so circulated as to be of some general and practical use. To

me it is simply a pleasure to read a confirmation of my own previous convictions.

Please tell me whether my twelve—and fourteen—year-old elegiacs have given you any satisfaction. "Full sense" was given me for the second copy (I hope you can construe that Eton phrase), and I am rather proud of it to this day.

I hope that Lady Houghton is better, and gains health with the summer in the country.

With all remembrances,
Yours affectionately,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XI

To Seymour Kirkup

22 Dorset Street,
Portman Sq.,
London, W.
Aug. 11th, [1864].

My dear Mr. Kirkup,

I cannot leave town again without answering your letter. I wish you could make it convenient to pay at last a flying visit to the country which after all is originally your own. No one understands more than I do, how difficult it must be to tear oneself away for a week

even from the most divine land and city in the world. But if you came over for a month or so now that you can make the journey in less than a week, you would at all events meet many who would be glad of the chance of meeting you, and see where art is now among us.

I do not add that you would give great pleasure to many, and not least to me.

I forget whether I told you that your portrait of my Mother as a girl has been brought down to my Father's country-house, and hangs now in the drawing-room, to the delight of us all. Before my grandmother died, it was always kept by her, and I never saw it till this year.

I was much struck by the passage in your last letter to me, where you speak of the Theory of Transmigration. Whether or not it be affirmed or denied by spirits I know that it has always appeared to me a very probable article of faith. I certainly do not remember having been another man before my birth into this present life, but I have often felt that I have been once upon a time a cat, and worried by a dog. I cannot see a cat without caressing it, or a dog, without feeling its fangs in my flanks.

I envy you your experience of snakes. I should like of all things to have them play with me and my cats. Notwithstanding I have not yet read *Melusine*.

It may interest you to know that to-day, in

the sale of Lord Charlemont's[1] library by auction there was sold a MS. of the *Roman de la Rose* with many beautiful illuminations, given by the poet Baïf to Charles IX., and having also the autograph of Philippe Desportes. It has been a wonderful sale for amateurs and bibliophiles, including a book with autograph notes by Milton, and many early editions of Shakespeare.

Gilchrist's *Life of Blake* is published by Macmillan, 2 vols. 8vo. I hope my treatise may appear before long,[2] when of course I shall send it to you. What do you think of this dogma of Blake's (inspired, as he asserts, not invented)? Swedenborg uttered no new truths, and did utter all the old falsehoods. Because he consulted Angels, who are ignorant about religion; instead of Devils, who hate religion and enjoy knowledge; whereas Blake piques himself on having received no information—inspiration from hell instead of heaven.

I have not yet thanked you for the present of your Arthurian notes, which to me are very valuable, and full of interest. I am glad to know that I may keep them without robbing you.

Did you ever meet with that rare book containing some of Blake's poems and headed by a frontispiece mainly designed (but not engraved)

[1] This was the second Earl of Charlemont (1775–1863).

[2] Swinburne's *William Blake* did not appear until 1868.

by Blake, *A Father's Memoirs of His Child*, by a D. A. Malkin? Apart from the interest of its connection with Blake, it is in my opinion the most astonishing study of physiology I ever met with. This child died at six, and left stories, maps, letters, etc., full of invention and imagination, and sketches of landscape which earned (after his death) the approbation of Blake. As far as I know, the instance is unique, for it is not a sample of forcing but of native and instinctive genius.

Believe me,
Yours very faithfully,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

S. Kirkup, Esq.

LETTER XII

To J. BERTRAND PAYNE

36, Wilton Crescent.
February 7th, [1865].

MY DEAR SIR,

I must ask you to let me have back from the printers the missing leaves of my MS.[1] as I want to preserve it for reference. Two I think are wanting (one returned by myself) between those received Friday and the last

[1] The MS. of *Atalanta in Calydon.*

batch; and others beginning from the second Chorus in the play.

I hope the proofs will be read more regularly and quickly as I am impatient to have the work over this week, which I really think it ought to be. I see no recent advertisement in the weekly papers. I must request that there may be enough of them inserted—as many as you think fit or useful, and as prominently. I am expecting the residue (unbound) copies of my former book,[1] which according to your suggestions I will forward to you as they come, to be re-advertised with a fresh title-page.

Yours very truly,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XIII

To Paulina, Lady Trevelyan

36, *Wilton Crescent,*
S.W.
March 15th, 1865.

My dear Lady Trevelyan,

I have just got your letter which has given me the greatest pleasure I have yet had with regard to my book.[2] I was in hopes it would find favour with you, as I think it is the

[1] *The Queen-Mother and Rosamund.*
[2] *Atalanta in Calydon,* 4to, 1865.

best executed and sustained of my larger poems. It was begun last autumn twelvemonth, when we were all freshly unhappy, and finished just after I got the news in September last of Mr. Landor's death, which was a considerable trouble to me as I had hoped against hope or reason that he who in the spring at Florence had accepted the dedication of an unfinished poem would live to receive and read it. You will recognise the allusion to his life and death at pp. 25, 26. As it is he never read anything of mine more mature than *Rosamund*. In spite of the funereal circumstances which I suspect have a little deepened the natural colours of Greek fatalism here and there, so as to have already incurred a charge of "rebellious antagonism" and such-like things, I never enjoyed anything more in my life than the composition of this poem, which though a work done by intervals, was very rapid and pleasant. Allowing for a few after insertions, two or three in all, from p. 66 to 83 (as far as the Chorus) was the work of two afternoons, and from p. 83 to the end was the work of two other afternoons: so you will understand that I enjoyed my work. I think it is pure Greek, and the first poem of the sort in modern times, combining lyric and dramatic work on the old principle. Shelley's *Prometheus* is magnificent and un-Hellenic, spoilt too in my mind by the infusion of philanthropic doctrinaire views and "progress of the species";

and by what I gather from Lewes's life of Goethe the *Iphigenia in Tauris* must be also impregnated with modern morals and feelings. As for Professor Arnold's *Merope*, the clothes are well enough, but where has the body gone? So I thought and still think the field was clear for me.

At the time when you were so ill I got bulletins constantly through Aunt Ju,[1] and when things began to improve I thought of writing, but it was considered better not. I could have heard nothing more than I did, and said nothing that you did not know. At least I hope and suppose all of you know what a bad time it was for me as for others.

I am raging in silence at the postponement from day to day of Mr. Carlyle's volumes. He ought to be in London tying firebrands to the tails of those unclean foxes called publishers and printers. Meantime the world is growing lean with hunger and ravenous with expectation. I finished the fourth volume last May in a huge garden at Fiesole, the nightingales and roses serving by way of salt and spice to the divine dish of battles and intrigues. I take greater delight in the hero, who was always a hero of mine and more comprehensible to my heathen mind than any Puritan, at every step the book

[1] Miss Julia Swinburne (1796–1893), the eldest daughter of the poet's grandfather.

takes. Trust in Providence somewhat spoils heroism, to me at least. The letter at the end of vol. 4, coming where and when it does, is a sample of what I conceive and enjoy as the highest and most *reasonable* heroic temper. "A God-intoxicated man" of course can fight, but I prefer a man who fights sober. Whether he gets drunk on faith or on brandy, it is still "Dutch courage," as the sailors call it. I must say Frederick's clear, cold purity of pluck, looking neither upward nor around for any help or comfort, seems to me a much more wholesome and more admirable state of mind than Cromwell's splendid pietism. And then who would not face all chances if he were convinced that the Gods were specially interested on his side and personally excited about his failure or success? It is the old question between Jews and Greeks, and I, who can understand Leonidas better than Joshua, must prefer Marathon to Gilgal.

Besides, as a king and a private man, Frederick is to me altogether complete and satisfactory, with nothing of what seems to me the perverse Puritan Christianity on the one hand, or on the other of the knaveries and cutpurse rascalities which I suspect were familiar at times to the greater, as always to the smaller, Buonaparte. I only draw the line at his verses; and even they have almost a merit of their own by dint of their supreme demerits. As extremes meet,

such portentous infamy in the metrical line becomes an inverted sign of genius. But was such a litter of doggrels whelped before by wise man or fool?

I am very glad to hear good accounts of Sir Walter and of your projects in the building way, which sound alluring. I only wish you were in London for Madox Brown's Exhibition of pictures, which is superb. I never knew till now how great and various and consistent a painter he is. If in spite of your neighbourhood to their arch enemy you still retain any charity for "the poor Fine Arts," there is plenty to see just now of a first-rate kind: but I will not tire you any further, unless I write again.

We are all fairly well, though some of us feel this first English winter, after so many spent abroad, unpleasantly enough. I am staying just now at my father's temporary house in town taken for the winter, and am looking out in a vague, desolate way for chambers where I shall be able to shift for myself *en permanence*. My father, as you may have heard, has completed the purchase of his place in Oxfordshire, Holm Wood. They move in, I believe, next month.

You must have seen Tennyson's book of *Selections*, and I hope agree with me that he might have made a better picking out of the lot. I say that *Boädicea*, as the highest if not sweetest of all the notes he ever struck, should

have served as prelude to the book. The yellow-ringleted Britoness is worth many score of revered Victorias. His volume of last summer struck me as a new triumph worth any of the old[1]; I read it with a pleasure as single and complete as I might have done at thirteen.

With best remembrances from all to yourself and Sir Walter,

Believe me ever,

Yours (in spite of ill-usage) most filially,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XIV

To Charles Augustus Howell

Ashburnham Place,
Battle,
Sussex.
Tuesday, [1865].

Infâme Libertin,

Write me a word according to promise. I shall be up in town in a day or two on my way from an uncle's to a father's, and between domestic life, rural gallops with cousins, study of Art and Illuminated Manuscripts and Caxton print, and proofs of a new edition of the virginal

[1] Tennyson's "volume of last summer" was *Enoch Arden*, etc., originally printed under the tentative title, *Idylls of the Hearth.*

poem *Atalanta, je m'enfonce dans des systèmes qui menent à tout—oui, chère fille, absolument à tout.*

I have added yet four more jets of boiling and gushing infamy to the perennial and poisonous fountain of *Dolores*. *O mon ami!*

Tout a toi,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

P.S.—I send you a fresh sample of *Dolores*. If you are amiable and write me something stimulating as the smell of firwoods, you shall have the rest:

For the Lords in whose keeping the door is
That opens on all who draw breath
Gave the cypress to Love, my Dolores,
The myrtle to Death.

And they laughed, changing hands in the measure,
And they mixed and made peace after strife;
Pain melted in tears, and was Pleasure,
Death tingled with blood, and was Life.

Voilà, mes amis, une vérité que ne comprendront jamais les sots idolateurs de la vertu.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have added ten verses to *Dolores*,—très-infâmes et très-bien tournés. "Oh! Monsieur, peut-on prendre du plaisir à de telles horreurs?"

LETTER XV

Mr. Thomas Purnell

Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning,
2 a.m. [1865].

Dear Purnell,

Sorry you should have waited in vain this evening — but you were warned. And when you know I have had to spend my time in leaving-taking with a friend[1] starting for Africa, you will excuse

Yours ever,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XVI

To Lord Houghton.

22a, Dorset St.
Friday [*August* 1865].

My dear Lord Houghton,

I was about to write you a word of thanks for your article[2] when I received the copy you sent me this morning. Nothing yet said or written about the book has given me nearly as much pleasure. Especially I have to thank you for the tone in which you refer to my

[1] Sir Richard Burton.
[2] On *Atalanta in Calydon* in the *Edinburgh Review*.

regard for Landor. As to the praise of myself, a poet more drunk with vanity than with wine could wish for no more. I only regret that in justly attacking my *Charenton* you have wilfully misrepresented its source. I should have bowed to the judicial sentence if instead of "Byron with a difference" you had said "De Sade with a difference." The poet, thinker, and man of the world from whom the theology of my poem is derived was a greater than Byron. *He* indeed, fatalist or not, saw to the bottom of gods and men. As to anything you have fished (how I say not) out of Mrs. Burton to the discredit of my innocence, how can she who believes in the excellence of "Richard" fail to disbelieve in the virtues of any other man? En moi vous voyez Les Malheurs de la Vertu; en lui Les Prospérités du Vice. In effect it is not given to all his juniors to tenir tête à Burton—but I deny that his hospitality ever succeeded in upsetting me—as he himself on the morrow of a latish séance admitted with approbation, allowing that he had thought to get me off my legs, but my native virtue and circumspection were too much for him. See now the consequences. J'étais vertueux—je devais suffrir. Accomplis tes décrets, Être Suprême!

Yours affectionately,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XVII

To Lord Houghton

Thornfold Park,
Frant,
Tunbridge Wells.
October 13th, [1865].

My dear Lord Houghton,

Mr. Maurice,[1] you may remember, considers *Atalanta* a complement to the hitherto imperfect *Evidences of Christianity*. As the second Paley, I expect at least a lay archidiaconate. Have you read your friend and philanthropic colleague Mr. T. Hughes's address on public schools? It was to me (as Mr. Pecksniff says) "very soothing."

Ever yours affectionately,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XVIII

To Lord Houghton.

22 Dorset Street.
Friday evening
[*Dec.* 1865].

My dear Lord Houghton,

As I do not doubt your kind intention, I will only ask Why? Where? How? Last

[1] The Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872).

time we met I had been spending the soberest of evenings here before starting to pick you up at 11 o'clock, which I understood was the order of the day. You as we returned seemed considerably infuriated with my unpunctuality—which I did not attribute to any influence of Bacchus on yourself. I am not aware of having retorted by any *discourtesy*. As the rest of the evening had been spent, after the few words of civility that passed between Mr. Tennyson and me, in discussing Blake and Flaxman in the next room with Palgrave and Lewes, I am at a loss to guess what has called down such an avalanche of advice. I have probably no vocation and doubtless no ambition for the service of Bacchus; in proof of which if you like I will undertake to repeat the conversation of Wednesday evening throughout with the accuracy of a reporter, as it happens to be fixed in my memory. I don't doubt your ability to do likewise, any more than the friendliness of your feeling towards me, of which I have proofs in plenty. Otherwise I should not care to defend myself against an admonition which if not "discourteous" is certainly not "common."

I remain, yours affectionately,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XIX

To Paulina, Lady Trevelyan

22, *Dorset Street,*
W.
December 10th, 1865.

My dear Lady Trevelyan,

I would have written two days since in answer to your last and most kind letter, but that I wanted to take time and reply as fully as I could. I must first, and once again, thank both yourself and Sir Walter alike for your great kindness. You will both, I hope, believe that I know how much I am indebted to the friendship and the courage which made you defend me against the villainy of fools and knaves. I wish I could better express my gratitude to him or to you. But I tried to express it in my second letter written and posted on the same day as that which you answered. I know I must have failed—but I did what I could.

Since writing to you, I have been reminded of things as infamous and as ridiculous inflicted upon others as undeserving as ever I am. Two years ago, for instance, I was informed (of course on the best and most direct authority) that a friend of yours as of mine had boasted

aloud of murdering his own illegitimate children. That they never had existed was of course nothing to the purpose. Fortunately, in this case, I was cited as a witness—and did pretty well, I believe, knock that rumour on the head. I cannot but suppose that all these agreeable traditions arise from one infamous source. When it is found out, we may hope to suppress it once for all. Meantime, upon the double suspicion, I have refused to meet in public a person whom I conceive to be possibly mixed up in the matter. At all events, I know that I have done the man no wrong—for a more venomous backbiter, I believe, never existed. The difficulty in all such cases is to come forward, collar your man morally or physically, and say "I am told you accuse me of having confessed to something disgraceful. Give me your reasons for this lie!" Of course no one could wish to see his name dragged into and through the dirt of such a quarrel: and therefore any gentleman is at the mercy of any blackguard—for a time.

As to my poems, my perplexity is this; that no two friends have ever given me the same advice. Now more than ever I would rather take yours than another's; but I see neither where to begin nor when to stop. I have written nothing to be ashamed or afraid of. I have been advised to suppress *Atalanta*, to cancel

Chastelard, and so on till not a line of my work would have been left. Two days ago Ruskin called on me and stayed for a long evening, during which he heard a great part of my forthcoming volume of poems, selected with a view to secure his advice as to publication and the verdict of the world of readers and writers. It was impossible to have a fairer judge. I have not known him long or intimately; and he is neither a rival nor a reviewer. I can only say that I was sincerely surprised by the enjoyment he seemed to derive from my work, and the frankness with which he accepted it. Any poem which all my friends for whose opinion I care had advised me to omit, should be omitted. But I never have written such an one. Some for example which you have told me were favourites of yours, such as the *Hymn to Proserpine* of the "Last Pagan"—I have been advised to omit as likely to hurt the feeling of a religious public. I cannot but see that whatever I do will be assailed and misconstrued by those who can do nothing and who detest their betters.

I can only lay to heart the words of Shakespeare — even he never uttered any truer — "Be thou as pure as ice, as chaste as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." And I cannot, as Hamlet advises, betake myself "to a nunnery."

I believe my aunt Julia is now with my father and mother at

Holm Wood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames,

where I mean to spend this Christmas, not having seen them for some months.

Meantime you will I am sure be glad to hear that my luck is looking up in the beautiful literary world of publishers and readers. I have already the wildest offers made me for anything I will do: and expect soon to have in effect the control of a magazine which I shall be able to mould as I please. This has always been a dream of mine; and very likely I shall come to grief, as Byron did on a similar occasion. Have you seen Moxon's series of "poets"? There are new things (as of course you know) in the Tennyson which are worth looking up—and I don't remember seeing it this year at Wallington. I am *doing* Byron for the series, as well as Landor: and I am to meet my partners in the serial work, Tennyson and Browning, at a publishers' feast some time this week.

I am sorry you don't like *Chastelard* personally, as I meant him for a nice sort of fellow. I send you the proof of a review which the writer sent to me, as evidence that some people

like him. I must say I thought I had made him behave in a rather chivalrous way—*notamment* in the 3rd and 5th acts. I think it was George Meredith who once told me that considering his conduct to the Queen, I had produced in him the most perfect *gentleman* possible.

It is rather a "trap" to send you these proofs at the end of a long letter—but I didn't mean to entrap you into writing or returning them till you have nothing better to do; and then you know what pleasure you will have given me.

Yours most sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XX

To Sir Edward Lytton-Bulwer

(Afterwards Lord Lytton)

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 17th, 1866.

SIR,

I should have written before to thank you for a double kindness, had your book[1] and letter been sooner sent on to my present address. As it is, you will no doubt understand how difficult I feel it to express my thanks for your

[1] *The Lost Tales of Miletus.*

gift, and for the letter, to me even more valuable, which accompanied it. To receive from your hands a book which I had only waited to read till I should have time to enjoy it at ease as a pleasure long expected, and deferred for a little (on the principle of children and philosophers) was, I should have thought till now, gratification enough for once. But you contrived at the same time to confer a greater pleasure ; the knowledge that my first work [1] written since mere boyhood had obtained your approval. Of the enjoyment and admiration with which I have read your book, I need not say anything. Pleasure such as this you have given to too many thousands to care to receive the acknowledgment of one.

Such thanks as these I have owed you, in common with all others of my age, since I first read your works as a child ; the other delegation is my own and prized accordingly as a private debt, impossible to pay, and from which I would not be relieved.

Believe me,
Yours very sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] *Atalanta in Calydon.*

LETTER XXI

To Paulina, Lady Trevelyan

22a, Dorset St.,
W.
[*March* 1866.]

My dear Lady Trevelyan,

I am very glad you approve of my rough notes on Byron. Of course when I wrote them I hoped you would, and the essay is honest so far as it goes, but was of course curtailed and confined in the dismallest way. I am going to "do" Keats as soon as my own book is out. I hope Sir Walter will join the Cruikshank committee. I am told by a personal friend of his that the poor old great man is very *hard up*, and could not if he died tomorrow leave his wife enough to live upon after so long a life of such hard work. I daresay Scotus will have told you all this much better than I can.

I was very sorry to hear of your having been again so ill. I hope and trust that you are well now. My mother has been going on in the same way, which is most improper, but is now beginning to pick up strength after a severe illness, and can at least sit up and write to me. That both my maternal relatives should be so ill at once is too much for a filial heart. Pray set a better example in future.

Ruskin and Meredith, among others, both write to me about the *Byron* in a most satisfactory way: but your note has given me more pleasure than theirs. As to the forthcoming magazine, having declined any share in the business work for myself, I was in hopes it would have fallen into the hands of Wm. Rossetti, who would have done the necessary work better than any one I can think of. As it is, if I contribute, it will be on the old terms that anything I sign shall go in, anything (in reason) I wish admitted or excluded shall be, and generally that when I please I may have a finger or *ten* fingers in the editorial pie. This is really all I know of the project. I met the working editor (as is to be) yesterday, and he seemed sensible and well disposed.

I hope soon to send you my own *Poems* and am, yours affectionately,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XXII

To Lord Houghton.

[*April*, 1866.]

Dear Lord Houghton,

I got a note yesterday about the dinner, and will say my say as I can.[1] Of course, I shall blow a small trumpet before Hugo. I thought something might be said of the new *mutual* influence of contemporary French and English literature, *e.g.* the French studies of Arnold and the English of Baudelaire.

Yours aff^ly^,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XXIII

To J. Bertrand Payne[2]

[*No place nor date.*
April, 1866.]

My dear Sir,

I write at once to thank you for your prompt answer to my note. The man's negli-

[1] This refers to the Royal Literary Fund Dinner of May 2, 1866, at which Swinburne made his only public speech.

[2] J. Bertrand Payne was the successor of Edward Moxon, who died in 1858. He was the responsible manager of Messrs. Edward Moxon & Co. during the whole period covered by Swinburne's dealings with that firm.

gence was the more vexatious to me as it made me necessarily appear neglectful of my friends, but I trust it is remedied by this time. I wrote about the advertisements in consequence of hearing so many people remark that they had seen none or few, which looked as if the book were not yet ready. In a day or two I hope to send you the missing pages of my Blake MS. Meanwhile, would it not save time if the printers were to put in type, and send me in slips, the remainder of the MS. for correction, and insert what is wanting when the book was paged? I am in a hurry to have done with it at last.

Yours very truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

P.S.—Excuse my scrawl, I cannot get a decent pen. I wish you could recommend me where to deal. I reopen this to add that the two copies[1] sent to my father's at Holmwood did arrive safe: as also one sent to Mr. Powell at Lee.

[1] Of *Poems and Ballads.*

LETTER XXIV

To Lord Lytton

22a, Dorset Street,
Portman Square,
W.
August 6th, [1866].

Dear Lord Lytton,

Your letter was doubly acceptable to me, coming as it did on the same day with the abusive reviews of my book [1] which appeared on Saturday. While I have the approval of those from whom alone praise can give pleasure, I can dispense with the favour of journalists. I thank you sincerely for the pleasure you have given me, and am very glad if my poems have given any to you. In any case, I, with the rest of the world, must remain your debtor without prospect of payment.

Nothing would give me more pleasure than to accept your kind invitation,[2] should it be convenient to you to accept me for a day or two in the course of the next fortnight. For some ten days or so I am hampered by engagements difficult to break even for a day.

[1] *Poems and Ballads*, 1866.

[2] To stay at Knebworth and consult about the transfer of *Poems and Ballads*.

Believe me, with many thanks for the kindness of your letter,

Yours very truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XXV

To Lord Lytton

22a, Dorset Street,
W.
August 10th, [1866].

DEAR LORD LYTTON,

I will come on the 16th if that day suits you. I shall be very glad to see Mr. Forster, for whose works I have always felt a great admiration. I cannot tell you how much pleasure and encouragement your last letter gave me. You will see that it came at a time when I wanted something of the kind, when I tell you that in consequence of the abusive reviews of my book, the publisher (without consulting me, without warning, and without compensation) had actually withdrawn it from circulation. I have no right to trouble you with my affairs, but I cannot resist the temptation to trespass so far upon your kindness as to ask what course you would recommend me to take in such a case. I am resolved to cancel nothing, and (of

ourse) to transfer my books to any other publisher I can find. I am told by lawyers that I might claim legal redress for a distinct violation of contract on Messrs. Moxon's part, but I do not wish to drag the matter before a law court. This business, you will see, is something worse than a scolding, to which, from my Eton days upwards, I have been sufficiently accustomed.

Yours sincerely,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XXVI

To Lord Lytton

22a, Dorset Street,
W.
August 13th, [1866].

Dear Lord Lytton,

I am much obliged by the letter of advice you wrote me, and if Lord Houghton had not gone off to Vichy, I should certainly take counsel with him. As it is, I am compelled to decide without further help. I have no relation with Messrs. Moxon except of a strictly business character, and considering that the head of this firm has broken his agreement by refusing to continue the sale of my poems,

without even speaking to me on the matter, I cannot but desire, first of all, to have no further dealings with anyone so untrustworthy. The book is mine. I agreed with him to issue an edition of 1,000 copies, he undertaking to print, publish and sell them, and if the edition sold off, I was to have two-thirds of the profits. He does not now deny the contract which he refuses to fulfil; he simply said to a friend who called on him as my representative, that on hearing there was to be an article in *The Times* attacking my book as improper, he could not continue the sale. As to the suppression of separate passages or poems, it could not be done without injuring the whole structure of the book, where every part has been as carefully considered and arranged as I could manage, and under the circumstances, it seems to me that I have no choice but to break off my connection with the publisher.

I have consulted friends older than myself, and more experienced in the business ways of the world, and really it seems to me I have no alternative. Before the book was published, if my friends had given me strong and unanimous advice to withdraw or to alter any passage, I should certainly have done so—in two instances I did, rather against my own impulse, which is a fair proof that I am not too headstrong or conceited to listen to friendly counsel. But *now*

to alter my course or mutilate my published work seems to me somewhat like deserting one's colours. One may or may not repent having enlisted, but to lay down one's arms, except under compulsion, remains intolerable. Even if I did not feel the matter in this way, my withdrawal would not undo what has been done, nor unsay what has been said.

Yours truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XXVII

To LORD LYTTON

22a, Dorset Street,
W.
August 17th, [1866].

DEAR LORD LYTTON,

I could catch neither train nor post yesterday, being too unwell all day to rise. As I am quite well to-day, I hope this will reach you before the afternoon train, by which I propose to come down. I am very sorry to be a day late in thanking you personally for your letter and advice.

I am,
Yours very truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XXVIII

To Charles Augustus Howell

Knebworth,
Stevenage,
Herts.
[*August*, 1866.]

My dear Howell,

You never turned up on Wednesday night, and kept my unhappy old female sitting up for you till three, and on Thursday I was very seedy and awaited you in vain. *O monstre! homme infâme!*

I want you to get for me two *Chastelards* and a *Byron*, and send them here at once if possible. Excuse my troubling you about my errands, but I know you won't mind, and I can't write to Moxons. I've had a note from Hotten which I must answer at once. Lord Lytton advises my reissuing the *Poems and Ballads* at once with him, and breaking off wholly with Payne, which is satisfactory. He says either Hotten should buy the surplus copies of the edition in his own interest, which would be impaired if Payne sold it as waste paper; or I must buy them up under a friend's name. Or, Payne must be compelled to destroy them instead. This is his advice as a man of business. Will you tell Hotten this, and let him act on it? Please, too, find out what

Hotten proposes about my *Blake*, which is nearly all in type. If he offers to buy it up I shall not allow Payne to publish it or anything more of mine. Please ask also about the remainders and next edition of *Chastelard*, *Atalanta*, and *The Queen Mother*. Lytton thinks Hotten's offers very fair, and advises me to arrange in the same way about the other books. So if Hotten likes to offer for them and arrange with Payne separately, well and good. I will reply as soon as he makes his offer. With Payne I will hold no further communication except through a third party.

All this you may shew or read to Hotten if you please. Pardon for the trouble my friendship entails on you, and believe me,

Your affectionate

A. C. Swinburne.

P.S.—I hope your cousin is well; please remember me to her. It is very jolly here, people, place, and weather. The furniture would at once cause Gabriel to attempt murder of the owner through envy—so rich are the cabinets, etc., in every hole and corner.

LETTER XXIX

To Lord Houghton

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
Nov. 2nd, [1866].

My dear Lord Houghton,

I am glad you like my ripost. I thought the sharper, and simpler in tone it was, the better. My motto is either to spare or strike hard. Mere titillation is lost on porcine hides.

The paper in *Fraser* I have not seen, but am expecting. I have had letters already from Ruskin and your friend Mr. Conway, who recalls our meeting under the auspices of the seabeds (?), and intimates that having been fighting my battles in the *New York Tribune* he means to continue apropos of the *Notes*,[1] of which I have sent him a copy. It is a very courteous and friendly letter.

If you have read the *Drum Taps* of his countryman, the great Walt (whose friends have published a pamphlet in his defence) I daresay you agree with me that his dirge or nocturne over your friend Lincoln is a superb piece of music and colour. It is infinitely impressive when read aloud.

Yours affectionately,
A. C. Swinburne.

[1] *Notes on Poems and Reviews.*

LETTER XXX

To Charles Augustus Howell

22a, DorsetStreet,
W.
Monday, [1866].

Fripon,

I want you to find out for me what (if any) day would suit Ruskin to come with yourself and Burne Jones to my rooms for an evening. He promised to come some day, and I am now in town for ten days or so. There was to have been a reading given, and he said he should like to meet you two.

Tout à toi,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XXXI

To Sir Richard F. Burton

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 11th, 1867.

My dear Burton,

I was within an ace of losing your letter altogether, and only recovered it from the Dead Letter Office by accident—or rather by the intervention of that all-wise and beneficent

Providence which regulates all sublunary things. You may know perhaps that Messrs. Moxon & Co., to whom it was addressed, tried to swamp my book by withdrawing it from circulation when the storm of warm water began to seethe and rage in the British tea-kettle, trusting that in British eyes their fraudulent breach of contract would be justified by the plea of virtuous abhorrence. Of course I withdrew all my books from their hands, and declined any further dealings with such a den of thieves. Consequently these denizens of the Cities of the Plain, whose fathers somehow escaped with Lot and his respectable family, pretended ignorance of my address (which, as well as my present publishers, they knew well enough the day before), and dismissed a whole heap of letters, papers, and books sent me from America to the Dead Letter Office. But for this you would have heard from me long ago, and received the book and pamphlet I now send you. You would have had them long before if I had had your address by me.

I am glad you like my swallow song, as I do your version of the Rondinella as far as given. I am still the centre of such a moral chaos that our excellent Houghton maintains a discreet and consistent neutrality, except that he wrote me a letter thoroughly approving and applauding the move taken; but I have not set eyes on his

revered form for months. Your impending opulence, and my immediate infamy, will too evidently cut us from the shelter of his bosom. I wish you had been at hand or within reach this year, to see the missives I got from nameless quarters. One anonymous letter from Dublin threatened me, if I did not suppress my book within six weeks from that date, with castration. The writer, "when I least expected, would waylay me, slip my head in a bag, and remove the obnoxious organs; he had seen his gamekeeper do it with cats." This is verbatim, though quoted from memory, as I bestowed the document on a friend who collects curiosities. I beg to add that my unoffending person is as yet no worse than it was. This was the greatest spree of all; but I have had letters and notices sent me (American and British) by the score, which were only less comic whether they come from friend or foe.

I hope we shall have you back before '69, not only for the cellar's sake, sublime as that "realised ideal" is certain to be. I have in hand a scheme of mixed verse and prose—a sort of étude à la Balzac *plus* the poetry—which I flatter myself will be more offensive and objectionable to Britannia than anything I have yet done.[1] You see I have now a character to keep up, and by the grace of Cotytto I will endeavour

[1] The never completed novel, *Lesbia Brandon*.

not to come short of it—at least in my writings. Tell me, if you have time, what you think of *Dolores* and *Anactoria* in full print.

I hope you will prevail on Mrs. Burton to forgive the use made in the former poem of the B.V.U., whose son I saw the other day mentioned in a tract by a Rabbinical Atheist as "Joshua ben Joseph." I wish I could run over to "5 o'clock tea," but can only send remembrances to you both, and hope you will not have forgotten me when you return to this "plaisant pays."

Toujours à vous,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XXXII

To Charles Augustus Howell

Arts Club,
Hanover Square.
January 15th, [1867].

My dear Howell,

Can you come with William Rossetti and me to the Museum to-morrow at twelve, to select from Blake's work there the engravings for my book? If you can't, or don't care to come, look me up (giving notice) some day this week. I am up only for a few days about this

Blake business, and I want to see you. It is ages since I did, and I hear you have been seedy, which is wrong, and *mène à tout*,

Your affectionate,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XXXIII

To GERALD MASSEY

22a, Dorset Street,
Portman Square,
W.
May 22nd, 1867.

SIR,

I must apologise for having left so long unanswered a letter which it was a pleasure to receive. I have been unwell and preoccupied of late, and I fear a very bad correspondent—and having first put apart, and then mislaid your letter, was unable to write to any purpose for want of a direction.

As soon as I received it I desired my publisher to forward to you my last books, supposing that he had your address. I hope you have received them before now.

Of your work on Shakespeare's *Sonnets* I read something when it appeared, but had not time to follow it out, though interested alike in your subject and your view of it. Hitherto I am

myself unconvinced that any of the series were written in the character of another real person ; they all seem to me either fanciful or personal—autobiographic or dramatic. But I hope before long to study the question started by you more fully.

I have been reading this evening your essay on Lamb in the *Fraser* of this month. Will you excuse the protest of a younger workman in the same field as yourself against your depreciatory mention of Lamb's Poetry ? I remember hearing Tennyson speak of it in the same tone ; but against both my seniors I maintain that there are two or three poems, and many passages, of serious and noble beauty, besides the verses you quote on his Mother's death. I have always thought that but for his incomparable prose the world would have set twice as much store by his verse. As a fellow student and lover of his genius and character you will understand my wish to admire him, and have him admired by others, on all sides ; and you will see also with what interest and attention I have read your essay.

Believe me,
Very truly yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XXXIV

To Lord Houghton

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
Thursday, July 18th, [1867].

My dear Lord Houghton,

My father came up in the afternoon of Saturday [*July 13th*], and I came down hither with him on Sunday, having again seen Mr. Tweed, who had a talk over me with Dr. Alison, my father's medical attendant, who has known me for years, though I have never hitherto had much occasion to trouble him professionally. They have together prescribed for me a course of diet and tonic medicine, and advise country air. Since my arrival I have not felt a moment's pain or sickness, and am now really quite well, although rather tired and weakened. Nothing could be more attentive than your people were to me until I was able to move. I was quite sorry for the trouble given to you and them, and as grateful for the care and kindness. I find Madame Mohl[1] was good enough to call and ask after me, but I had left town. Will you thank her for me, and tell her how much better I am? Besides Alison's and

[1] Mary [Clarke] von Mohl (1793–1883), the friend of Madame Récamier.

Tweed's prescriptions, we have a very good doctor here constantly at hand, Reading being but a short drive hence. The weather is wavering between sun and rain, but the air here suits me well. I am prescribed "light literature"—of all things! as if I ever indulged in heavy! I am sure Alison has a vague idea of hours spent in hard study of philosophy and history—though I assure him that the most abstract authors I read are Flaubert and Trollope.

Yours affectionately,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XXXV

To CHARLES AUGUSTUS HOWELL

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
July 23rd, 1867.

MY DEAR HOWELL,

I write, as I cannot hope to see you before your marriage comes off, only to say how heartily I wish you all the joy possible, and shake hands across the paper. It is for my own satisfaction; I should not like to feel excluded from among the friends who wish you joy. I would give much to have something better to send than my love and good wishes. Take them in default of the better thing, and

write me a line if you have leisure. I suppose your time is now near at hand, and I am here under doctors' hands for a month more at least. I had a very bad attack a week since, beginning with a sudden and unprovoked fainting fit about noon. My father was telegraphed for, and I was brought down hither next day. I am all right now, only not over strong, and have to take care, and submit to the care of others. I find comfort in reflecting that I am not the first or the unluckiest of innocent sufferers.

I hope you and yours will remain in Fate's good books. Give my love to Ned and Gabriel,[1] and all friends. And with renewed love and wishes to yourself,

Believe me always,
Your affectionate,
ALGERNON C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XXXVI

To Lord Houghton

Holmwood,
Henley on Thames.
August 8th, [1867].

DEAR LORD HOUGHTON,

I have written to Hotten to send you the number of *Poems and Ballads* desired.

[1] Edward Burne Jones and D. G. Rossetti.

Thanks again for all the trouble you took with me. I have had no return of fainting or any discomfort here beyond a strained knee. They doctor me with tonics and champagne, and I thrive so well that having no one to speak to and nothing beyond the family wall I shall end by writing something which will make the author "du hideux roman de J . . ." turn enviously in his grave. One always writes *des horreurs* when one is *en famille*. I have two innocent songs forthcoming in the *Fortnightly* ;[1] also some prose notes.[2] I have told Hotten to send Lord Broughton a copy of my Byron essay, and shall be delighted if it pleases him. Thanks for the hint. Have you seen our names are taken in vain together by some scribe in *Blackwood's ?* The liberties of the Press, etc., etc. (*vide* Rouher et Cie. *passim*). As you from Ceylon, I have heard from Brazil. H.M. Consul at Santos [Burton] writes me renewed congratulations on my success in bruising the head of British virtue. I *hope* Mrs. Burton did *not* read Richard's remarks on *Faustine*,—*et pour cause !*

Yours affectionately,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] *Regret* and *The Halt before Rome.*

[2] The essay on Matthew Arnold's *New Poems.*

LETTER XXXVII

To Edmund Gosse

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
September 14th, 1867.

Sir,

I have received your letter and its enclosure. I have not much time for correspondence, but I answer it at once, as you desire my advice. I certainly do not urge you to resign the habit of writing if it gives you pleasure without interfering with other things; I have no right to give such counsel. What prospect of growth and advance in the art you may have is impossible to say. Less promising verses than yours have perhaps been the forerunners of success, and more promising ones of ultimate failure. A man's first attempts can never possibly afford reasonable ground for pronouncing decisively whether he is qualified or disqualified for the attainment of his hope.

One thing, while sympathising with your wishes, I do advise you against: too much thinking and working in one channel. Neither you nor I can tell what kind of work you will in the long run be able to accomplish; but it is certain that good or ill success in this matter

of poetry need neither make nor mar a man's work in life. I understand the impulse to write of which you speak, and the pain of checking or suppressing it; nor do I tell you to suppress or check it: only not to build upon it overmuch. To fret yourself in the meantime with alternations of hope and fear is useless if you are to succeed, and more than useless if you are not: I always thought so for myself, before I had sent anything to press. One wishes of course for success as for other pleasant things; but the readier we hold ourselves to dispense with it, if necessary, the better. I am not old enough to preach, but I am old enough to tell you how I thought at your age of this matter, which of course was to me as serious an aspiration as to you now. To encourage or discourage another is a responsibility I cannot undertake, especially as I think one ought to need or heed neither encouragement nor discouragement,

With good wishes,
Yours truly,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XXXVIII

To Thomas Purnell

Dec. 9th, [1867].

Dear Purnell,

Come when you please and take me to Zrübra say Wednesday at any hour—this week, I am probably—*not* certainly—disengaged any evening. Let me know as soon as may be if you see Dolores[1] before I do, tell her with my love that I would not show myself sick and disfigured in her eyes. I was spilt last week out of a hansom, and my nose and forehead cut to rags—was seedy for four days, and hideous.

Ever yours,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XXXIX

To Seymour Kirkup

22a, Dorset Street,
Portman Square,
London, W.
March 28, [1868].

My dear Mr. Kirkup,

I have waited long, but only because I was not ready with the right words, to answer

[1] Adah Isaacs Menken.

your letter about my book on Blake. I was especially desirous to know what you would think of it, and sure that if it [seemed] to you satisfactory, it must be, howe[ver] inadequate, a step in the right dir[ection]. Hotten—the publisher of my book—intends to "issue" copies done by hand of Blake's mystic works from the first to the last. I of course encourage him in the enterprise. Though I doubt if it will *pay* in this "ultima [Thule ?]" of damp, snow, rain, hail and all that Dante found in the nethermost hell, *i.e.* in England.

If, like Shakespeare's Richard 3rd "I were myself alone," would not I live out my life in Italy? But there are ties. (This reminds me that my Mother desired, when I wrote, to be "kindly remembered" to you—she was, and is always, pleased by your recollection.)

Do you know Dr. Garth Wilkinson,[1] the biographer [and trans]lator of Swedenborg? He has written [to me] about this essay on Blake, and since [calle]d on me, having received an answer to his first note. It rather surprised me to find the most eminent disciple of Swedenborg a convert to the worship of Blake. (Blake being so very heretical a Swedenborgian?) He

[1] Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson (1812–1899), the mystic. He had edited Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* in 1839.

says that my book has shown him a quite new outlet of revelation.[1] . . .

[The rest of this letter is lost.]

LETTER XL

To Bryan Waller Procter

22a, Dorset Street,
W.
September 1st, 1868.

My dear Sir,

I send you some verses[2] written a day since on reading Charles Lamb's Sonnet to you,[3] and remembering what you said (in jest) to Mr. Bayard Taylor and myself the other day about your poetry being less well known than

[1] Garth Wilkinson sent Swinburne a collection of his own philosophic poems, *Improvisations from the Spirit*, which Emerson had praised. I remember Swinburne's irreverent fun over these verses, which he found quite unintelligible, and said should have been "dictated to Blake by the Soul of a Flea."—E. G.

[2] The Poem entitled *Barry Cornwall* ["In vain men tell us time can alter"] first appeared in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, October 20th, 1874, p. 11. When reprinted in *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series, 1874, pp. 98–99, the poem was re-christened *Age and Song*.

[3] Lamb's Sonnet ["Let hate, or grosser heats, their foulness mask"] originally appeared (under the title *Commendatory Verses to the Author of Poems Published under the Name of Barry Cornwall*) in *The London Magazine*, September, 1820.

it had been. My tribute is less worth having, but not less sincere; so perhaps you will take it, and excuse it, as what it is, an impromptu.

Yours very truly,
ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

LETTER XLI

To Lord Houghton

Arts Club,
Hanover Square.
Nov. 9th, 68.

DEAR LORD HOUGHTON,

. . . On my return from Normandy —where I received no letters—I found it waiting for me. I will tell Hotten to send you *Siena.* It is no end of a work to wring an instalment of my money from his "throat and maw," though he admits an outstanding debt of hundreds. I have met Mrs. Burton lately, and found her very well and bright—pleasant and friendly of course: but I fear her late family loss will cut her up much.

Did any common friend tell you of my adventures at Étretât last month,[1] when I had to swim between 2 and 3 miles in an equinoctial

[1] For a full narration of this incident, see Gosse's *Portraits and Sketches*, pp. 17–29.

sea for my life, and at last was picked up by a passing fisherboat? That was a lark, and I found place and people charming.

Ever yours,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

I leave town for Holmwood in a day or two.

LETTER XLII

To Mr. Sampson Low[1]

22a, Dorset St.,
W.
December 21st, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR,

I shall be happy to undertake the *Coleridge* on the terms proposed. I presume I shall also have the selection and arrangement of the poems in my hands. It will be a more congenial labour to me than the Selection from Byron, who is not made for selection—Coleridge is. In my eyes his good poems have no fault, his bad poems no merit; and to disengage these from those will be a pleasure to me.

I can let you have the work in less than three months if you like; I shall only have to put

[1] Mr. Sampson Low, of Messrs. Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, who in due course published *Christabel and the Lyrical and Imaginative Poems of S. T. Coleridge. Arranged and Introduced by Algernon Charles Swinburne.* London, 1869.

other work aside and give my whole attention to this for a time ; and this may as well be done now as later.

Believe me,
Very truly yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XLIII

To Lord Houghton

22a, Dorset Street.
Jan. 5th, [1869].

My dear Lord Houghton,

I find your letter here on my return from your university where I have been spending Xmas among the hospitalities of King's College, and have met living men of the great Keate epoch of Eton development—fossils (how interesting to the scientific student of pædosarcotomy !) of the pre-Hawtrey period of formation. I had never seen Cambridge before, and enjoyed it in the naked beauty of a vacation. Bendyshe, my host, and now senior fellow of his college (*tout pis* for the Galileans—*teste* Burton and cannibalic anthropology in general) has unearthed in the public library an heirloom of no less an anthropologist than Donatien Alphonse François, Marquis de Sade. A presentation copy

of *Aline et Valcour*—" don de l'auteur au citoyen La Loubie, *son meilleur ami*." Who was this "best man" of the author of *Justine* is a riddle of much moment to science. Did you in all your revolutionary researches ever come across the name thus honoured? And did he—or who did—bequeath this pearl of great price to the favoured University of Cambridge? . . . [This letter is mutilated.]

P.S.—I will send *Siena* and a photograph as soon as I can lay hand on either.

LETTER XLIV

To Lord Houghton

[1869.]

My dear Houghton,

What a wonderful work[1] this is of Browning's. I tore through the first volume in a day of careful study, with a sense of absolute possession. I have not felt so strongly that delightful sense of being mastered—dominated—by another man's imaginative work since I was a small boy. I always except, of course, Victor Hugo's, which has the same force and insight and variety of imagination together with that exquisite bloom and flavour of the highest poetry

[1] *The Ring and the Book.*

which Browning's has not: though it has perhaps a more wonderful subtlety at once and breadth of humorous invention and perception.

As for interest, it simply kills all other matters of thought for the time. This is his real work—big enough to give him breathing-space, whereas in play or song he is alike cramped. It is of the mixed-political composite-dramatic order which alone suits him and serves him.

Yours sincerely,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XLV

To Lord Morley

Ball: Coll:
Oxford.
April 25th, [1869].

Dear Mr. Morley,

I should like to review Victor Hugo's new book[1] when I have leisure, if you would like to entrust it to me for the *Fortnightly*, and if you do not want an immediate article. I have so many things on hand just now that I could not undertake it for the next month or two with any confidence of treating the subject at all adequately. Please let me know if I am to

[1] *L'Homme qui Rit.*

think of it as a paper to appear in *The Fortnightly Review* or not. My present address is 12 North Crescent, Bedford Square. I am here with the Master for a day or two longer only.

Ever yours truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XLVI

To Lord Morley

22a, Dorset St.,
W.
May 17th, [1869].

DEAR MR. MORLEY,

Here is the little pamphlet[1] of Landor's of which I spoke. Thanks for sending the cheque, and for telling me about the words inserted. I *did* mean to say that I thought Shelley's allusion was to the evil which *was* wrought by Christianity in its working days—not meaning of course, that I held it *per se* an evil, or in any sense an unmixed evil, but a thing which historically considered had assuredly done evil as well as good to the world. But, of course, I don't protest against your right to insert the four or five words. I have indeed, candidly,

[1] This must surely have been the *Moral Epistle to Earl Stanhope*, 1795, of which Swinburne possessed a fine copy.

no doubt it was right and wise to preclude misrepresentation.

I shall be most anxious to see what Carlyle says of Landor. I hope his views of art and life, as well as politics, will not distort or discolour what ought to be a tribute worthy of two great men.

I take *L'Homme qui Rit* as a room in a great house, not my favourite room, and judge the people, not as English actualities, but as human possibilities. *E. g.* Joriane, though un-English, is a subtle, splendid, and I think in other times and countries a truthful study.

Yours very truly,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XLVII

To Lord Morley

Holmwood,
August 9th, [1869].

Dear Mr. Morley,

Thanks for the note announcing payment of my cheque. I should have answered your last note at once, but, with my habitual carelessness, put it by at the time and forgot. I have been far from well, but am now quite right. London and summer together always upset me more or less, and I have been much

harassed with business troubles connected with lawyers and publishers, till I could well nigh parody Diderot's prayer and wish the last of the one lot strangled with the *cordon d'entrailles* of the last example of the other.

I was going to write to you, as it happened, before your note reached me, to know whether you would like to have in *The Fortnightly Review* the firstling of my forthcoming book[1]—now for the *immediate* present postponed—a lyric poem of some length on the European prospect as seen from the democratic point of view. Rossetti wants me to bring out something of the kind at this moment when it might tell; but as I hope certainly to publish my volume of national or political lyrics in the next autumn season, I cannot, of course, guess whether you would think it worth while to have it as it were on so short a lease; and it must make part of the series, though, of course, standing separate by itself. If you let me know that you would like to have it—supposing, of course, you find it otherwise available—it shall be sent at once. It is called *The Eve of Revolution*—an Ode in some twenty or thirty regular strophes or stanzas.[2]

Yours very sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] *Songs before Sunrise*, published in 1871.

[2] *The Eve of Revolution* did not appear in *The Fortnightly Review*. It was first printed in *Songs before Sunrise*, 1871.

LETTER XLVIII

To Thomas Purnell

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
December 21st, [1869]

My dear Purnell,

I write by return of post to say how gladly I will adopt any arrangement made by you with regard to the reproduction of my books abroad, and how much obliged I am by the good office you are sure to do me in this matter as in others.

It is vexatious about Hotten, but so is everything in that quarter. I am waiting in vain to hear anything decisive on the confused matter of money due or not due to me. Morley has promised the proofs of *Lisa*[1] this week. Pray do what you can for it, so that I may not once more be plundered of my poor but honest earnings. God knows I cannot spare them, and it would be a windfall to me now if I could get some reasonable modicum of ready money to meet needful demands, by printing short poems in magazines on terms fit for me to deal on. Of course I can't go about knocking with my

[1] *The Complaint of Mona Lisa*, printed in *The Fortnightly Review*, February, 1870.

works at men's doors for acceptance. I wish I were with the Xini at their meetings. Perhaps I may have to be in London after Xmas. You know I want new chambers. I should like to ask counsel of you in deciding things when we meet. There is no rhyme to *Dulcimer* in "Kubla Khan" (the line I suppose you to mean is there —not in "Christabel"). C. sometimes I think slips in a line without a rhyme to back it—a thing permissible to the Supreme melodist. How admirable is Tennyson's new-style Farmer—and how poor his old-style Idylls of the Prince Consort—Mort d'Albert.

Please remember me kindly and with all good wishes for the season to Knight, Marston (père et fils) and all our friends whom I have so long wanted the sight of. I am very well and doing a fair instalment of more or less desultory work. I have not heard from the East. I return Osgood's letter with thanks and remain,

Ever yours,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XLIX

To Hugh Reginald Haweis

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
Sunday, February 13th, 1870.

Dear Sir,

I have but an hour ago received from London your two notes, and the enclosed proof. I have been several months out of town, and there has been some delay and irregularity in the transmission of my letters, otherwise I should have replied at once to your first note of January 20, expressing my sense of the high honour done me by the trust of a charge so precious as the translation of a poem of Victor Hugo's.

As it is, I have at once applied myself to the task, and have just thrown off the version I send you, which, inadequate as it may be to reproduce the exquisite charm of the original, is at least as closely faithful as I can make it.[1] I hope it will not be too late for the purpose, and

[1] In January, 1870, Haweis, at that time acting as Editor of *Cassell's Magazine*, obtained from Victor Hugo a poem entitled *Les Enfants Pauvres.* This poem, and Swinburne's translation *The Children of the Poor*, were published in *Cassell's Magazine* for May, 1870, together with a full-page woodcut and two marginal illustrations.

that the delay will not have caused any great inconvenience.

Yours very sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER L

To LORD MORLEY

22a, Dorset St.,
W.
April 15th, [1870].

DEAR MR. MORLEY,

You would have had this many weeks earlier, but that Rossetti at the last moment put in two or three new poems of importance, and I kept back my MS. to insert due notices of them. I have now touched on every poem—in fact, given a thorough and most careful analysis of the whole book. I never took so much pains in my life with any prose piece of work, and I hope you will approve of it. I think it at all events a full and impartial notice.[1] The book will be out this month, so that in reviewing it on May 1st we shall not be reviewing the unborn.

Yours very truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

Please send proofs *hither*.

[1] Swinburne's Review of D. G. Rossetti's *Poems*, 1870, printed in *The Fortnightly Review* for May, 1870.

LETTER LI

To Charles Augustus Howell

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
September 9th, [1870].

My dear Howell,

A thousand thanks for your note. I hope you will subdue Hotten at once, for I have out on Monday (*chez* Ellis, of course) an *Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic* thrown off at a heat on the arrival of the news—written, copied, and despatched in two days. I could not wait and let it miss the nick of time to appear in. So pray tackle Hotten at once if you can, and reassure me against any damned annoyance he or his lawyers might attempt to offer on the occasion. I have already sent Ellis the proofs corrected.

Have you seen the statement in the papers that poor Sala—I forget if you knew him personally—has been "subjected to terrible and painful outrages" by the mob at Paris as a Russian spy?

In haste,
Ever yours.

LETTER LII

To Thomas Purnell

Holmwood,
September 11th, [1870].

My dear Purnell,

Thanks for your note and despatch of the *Ode*.[1] I have written to Ellis to get you a reviewing copy at once, and am charmed to hear of your undertaking it. I shall look forward eagerly to next Saturday's *Athenæum*. I think you *had* better withdraw my poem from Froude's handling. Give these people an inch and they take 10,000,000 ells: give the dog Humbug or the bitch Morality a bone and it claims the whole carcase.

Ever yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

Remember me to Knight when you see him. I have not heard of him for ages. I hope he may give the *Ode* a shove, as I am *politically* interested in its fortunes. If he does, will he kindly send me a copy of his notice?

[1] *Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic.*

LETTER LIII

To Charles Augustus Howell

Holmwood,
November 18th, [1870].

My dear Howell,

I was so glad to get your letter, and to find you had been to my solicitors and told them of Hotten's evasions of his agreement with you. I got one from them by this same post to say that Hotten had proposed Tuesday next for the long evaded day of reckoning, and also proposed that if you and his man cannot agree then, an ultimate umpire shall be chosen whose decision shall be final. I have told them in answer that the matter, as far as I am concerned, rests in your hands as my representative, and in this as in other points I will be guided by your opinion. But my own opinion is that it is merely a fresh device for the shuffling off the final day of settlement, as he has already evaded his previous engagements. I trust to you to do what you think right as to his proposal, and whatever that may be shall be quite content to accept it. I have told Ellis to send me the last proofs,[1] and how I want the contents arranged. I don't think he will consent to issue the book

[1] Of *Songs before Sunrise.*

without legal sanction. The lawyers have advised him *not*, while the arbitration is still pending. But I hope that will soon be settled now. I shall be anxious to hear of the event on Tuesday.

Ever yours affectionately,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LIV

To Lord Morley

The British Hotel,
Cockspur Street.
Dec. 28th, 1870.

Dear Mr. Morley,

I should have answered your letter of 20 days since long before but have been for days laid up with influenza that held me fast in bed, blind, deaf, exuding, with eyes that could but water and hands that could but blow the lamentable nose.

For the time before, when I was about and alive, I was utterly occupied with my book,—in the last agonies of childbirth—and rent in twain between two midwives or publishers—as it might be Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig—contending over me prostrate. Now—thank Something—all

that is settled, Mrs. Gamp dismissed as (metaphorically) drunk and incapable—and in ten days I hope a book if not a man "will be born into the world."[1]

I am ashamed about Ford[2]—but could I be sure of three days' health and leisure and spirits I would send you a study of his and the other Elizabethan's relation to each other (starting from a view of his special qualities) which should be a decent piece of work. A thing of shreds and patches I couldn't write and wouldn't send. I thoroughly admire and agree with your "Byron."

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] *Songs before Sunrise* was published by F. S. Ellis early in 1871. But Hotten had put forward an impudent claim to the right of publishing not only the volumes already under his charge, but any future work written by Swinburne. The settlement of this claim delayed the appearance of the book, and caused its author a considerable amount of annoyance.

[2] "John Ford." The monograph first appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, July 1871, and was reprinted in *Essays and Studies*, 1875, pp. 276–313.

LETTER LV

To Thomas Purnell

Saturday Evening,
March 4th, [1871].

My dear Purnell,

By an accident which it would be gross flattery to call a damned one, I have omitted to appeal to your good offices till I fear it may be too late. I *had* to write to my friend Bayard Taylor about seeing to the American issue of my forthcoming book *Songs before Sunrise* (he having offered his services on any such occasion)—but finding I could not lay hand on his address I yesterday asked Ellis in despair to do what he could for it. I had quite forgotten how admirably you had managed the *Song of Italy* (which belongs to the same cycle) for me. Now, to-day, I go to Ellis and find he has authorised (as I gave him carte blanche—indeed, requested him to do anything he could) the correspondent of a firm "Robert Brothers" of—Hell for aught I know—to see what they would say to the offer of the book. Then—by the devil's too late illumination of a blind soul that wakes and is damned—I saw that I ought to have asked you to offer it for me to Ticknor and Fields (wasn't it?) as a companion to the *Song*—or rather as the steamer of which that

was the tug. For this is hitherto my ripest and carefullest—and out of sight my most personal and individual work. Now—is it too late to do anything properly? Ellis says in twenty days we shall have the answer to his offer, which he wishes to recall only less than I do. Meantime—could nothing be done? In any case I would *so* much rather have it out in America under the same auspices as the *S. of I.*—for a dozen reasons. But as soon as my brains and fingers—both hard at work—can manage, out it shall and must come here this season—if only because it is infiltrated and permeated with Mazzini—and I see this day and yesterday the beginning of one of the periodical evacuations of menstruous and monstrous obliquy from the British press on the solar track of his name and I *should* like my best book to appear, lovingly and humbly laid at his feet, just when the mangy mongrels of British journalism were yelping behind and beneath his heels.

Ever yours truly,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LVI

To William Michael Rossetti

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
June 1st, [1871].

Dear Rossetti,

I see in yesterday's *Guardian* an announcement that "Miss Christina Rossetti is recovering from her late severe illness." I hope it has not been such as to cause serious anxiety to you and yours, but I cannot help writing a line on the spot to say so. Having myself been more than once reduced to the last extremity by newspapers (by this one repeatedly) when in a state of robust health, I am not always alarmed at their death-warrants, but one would always like to be reassured. If you have really had to pass through any such time of distress, I need not try to put in words any expression of my deep sympathy, or of relief in learning of it as past, as I hope you and all yours are well enough assured of it. Now that one has time to breathe and think after the unspeakable shocks of last week, I have one idea on which I should like to consult you. If Victor Hugo comes straight over here and to London, in consequence of the vile act of the Belgian government, I think it

would be well and timely to offer him some token of recognition and homage on the part of his believers. It need neither be an exclusively republican nor a merely artistic demonstration ; it ought, in my mind, to comprise the names of all such as would be glad at such a time as this to pay tribute either to the convictions and conduct of the exile or to the work and position of the artist. I have written to Knight in reply to a note asking me to make one of a committee for giving a dinner to the Comédie Française—which of course I shall be happy to do—to see if he thinks that truly British form of reception would be the likeliest to succeed in this case, or whether a simple address or deputation would be the best tribute. Under the circumstances my one desire would be to make it as emphatic and public as possible, both as a recognition and as a protest. For the rest, I may say to you as frankly as I would say to Hugo that so far from objecting to the infliction of death on the incendiaries of the Louvre I should wish to have them proclaimed (to use a phrase of his own) not merely " hors la loi " but " hors l'humanité," and a law passed throughout the world authorising any citizen of any nation to take their lives with impunity and assurance of national thanks —to shoot them down wherever met like dogs. A political crime is a national crime and punishable only by the nation sinned against ; France

alone has the right to punish the shedding of French blood by putting to death on that charge a Bonaparte or a Thiers, a Rigault or a Gallifet ; but it is the whole world's right and duty to take vengeance on men who should strike at the whole world such a blow as to inflict an everlasting incurable wound by the attempted destruction of Rome, Venice, Paris, London—of the Vatican, Ducal Palace, Louvre, or Museum. But this my deep and earnest conviction in no degree alters my view of the case as it stands between Victor Hugo on this side and the Belgian government on that.

Ever yours affctly.,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LVII

To JOSEPH KNIGHT

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
June 1st, [1871].

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

I am much obliged to you for thinking of me in connection with your project and shall take it as a great compliment to be rated as one of your committee. I must come to London

before the Comédie Française leaves it, but I want to stay here quiet as long as I can for pecuniary, sanitary and other reasons: so I did not think of moving for a month yet. You must let me know when your affair comes off, and I must find a temporary shelter for my roofless head (which is now, as Shelley says, "like Cain's or Christ's," so far as lodging goes) in some furnished room for a week or so when I come up. It would be a great kindness if any one could find me one, however remote, from which I could look out for "a permanency": otherwise the son of man hath not where to lay his head or any other part of him.

If Victor Hugo comes to London at once in consequence of the base cowardice of the Belgian government in denying him shelter, I wish very much that some other reception could be offered him on the part of those who at once admire his devotion to conscience in this matter at all costs, and recognise the greatest poet of our age in the man who gives this proof of faith. It need not be confined, surely, to men who agree in every point and detail with every article of his social and political creed: but as a protest, a tribute and a recognition, it would reflect on those who should offer it under the circumstances the honour which it cannot pretend to confer on the most illustrious among living men's names.

If you can suggest any way of putting this

idea in practice by any means—address, deputation, dinner (your note put that in my head)—I am sure that many men of high mark and various eminence would join whether for art's sake or principle's. Your help would be a great favour done to yours ever affect[ly]

A. C. SWINBURNE.

I hope you are not suffering from illness at present. I am very well, though the black cold weather has affected my throat, etc., these two months.

LETTER LVIII

TO JOSEPH KNIGHT

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
June 28th, [1871].

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

I have received two papers from the Committee, but the meetings announced were over before return of post, if not before the circulars reached me. I see in to-day's *Times* that the 8th of July is named for the day. If I am expected to be there I must have where to lay my head the night before and after. If you can find me a harbour of refuge to be taken by

the week in any reasonable quarter—I don't care where—it will be very kind ; also if you will tell me anything I ought to know about the arrangements, tickets, etc. Does your own ticket admit two friends also ? or do you purchase theirs separately ? or what ? I hope it will go off pleasantly and I should like to see the great folk of the C.F. as large as life and no larger. I want to see one of their performances first, though, at least ; so if you can manage for me I mean to come up early next week—say Monday. I shall only want a short month's lodging, as I am going to Scotland on Aug. 1st.

Ever yours,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LIX

To Joseph Knight

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
July 2nd, [1871].

My dear Knight,

I am so much obliged for your kindness in looking me out a place of rest when you are so awfully busy and tired as you must be. Salisbury St. would suit me beautifully, and though the terms would be more than twice as

high as I could afford for a "permanency," I may venture on them for a fortnight or three weeks without fear of a financial crisis. I hope to-morrow to call on you in the flesh and hear all that has to be heard further ; I shall leave by a morning train if I can conveniently, and drive to you from the station, taking my chance of finding you in then or later.

I have asked my friend George Powell to the Saturday affair and he has accepted. I suppose that it is to you that I should "nominate" him ? I hope to heaven I may be in time for at least one evening of the Comédie Française. I did not know this was their last week, and here have I been all this time out of town and dying to see them act.

Ever yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LX

To Frederick Locker

Holmwood, Henley-on-Thames.
August 4th, [1871].

My dear Locker,

A thousand thanks for the bit of *Bothwell*[1] just arrived. It seems admirably correct considering the state of the MS.

[1] The *First Act of Bothwell*, privately printed as an octavo pamphlet of 69 pages by Frederick Locker.

I send the Sestina, Rizzio's first song, sung in Scene I, when the Queen asks for one ; if it was left here as I supposed. I should like very much to have the whole Poem printed as you suggest, but you know it may be years before I finish it on the scale designed. I feel at times crushed under the Tarpeian weight of my materials. At the least computation there must be 20 Scenes in Act II. If the thing is to be done it must be done on a great scale in every sense. Its motto must be Caesar Borgia's—*Aut Caesar, aut Nullus.* When it is finally printed, I should like the printer to put the names prefixed to the speeches in full, instead of mere initials like "Q," "R," etc., both for sightliness and convenience. Till then I don't think it worth while to have the corrections made, especially as I may alter and add again and again, tho' on the whole I think this will do as it stands. When they send me the MS. back I can correct these proofs, and that will be enough *en attendant* to do for the text.

I wrote a bit of a scene yesterday between Murray and the Queen ; it is the drier political details that bother me, but without some reference to them the action (and consequently the passion) is unintelligible. I study Shakespeare constantly, *Antony and Cleopatra*, especially, to try if I can learn and catch the trick of condensing all this, and cramming a great mass of public

events into the compass of a few scenes or speeches without deforming or defacing the poem.

I am quite well now, and think of going to Scotland in a week on my promised visit to the Master of Balliol—(who would have told me so 10 years ago when I was rusticated and all but expelled ?), but I was very unwell for days after I saw you. My father came that night and brought me down here next morning. Of course I was very much vexed with my own folly in having made myself ill, and ashamed to think of my friends knowing it was my own fault ; but I trust to keep as I am now in good health and sense.

Give my kind regards to Lady Charlotte and "the young lady," [1] and believe me,

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] Miss Eleanor Locker, afterwards Mrs. Lionel Tennyson and later Mrs. Birrell.

LETTER LXI

To Frederick Locker

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
August 9th, [1871].

My dear Locker,

I have just a minute before post time to acknowledge the receipt of my second proofs and MS., with many thanks. I hope they will be able to let me have the rest by the end of the week, as on Monday I must be off for the Highlands, and it would be a relief to have the 1st Act done with. I will keep the MS. safe for you, as you say you would like to have it. I hope you will have a good time out of town.

Ever yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

P.S.—A thousand thanks for the beautiful copy of my *Prelude*,[1] which is like enough to prove the whole Poem and Epilogue. I never thought of your having the trouble yourself, and am very much obliged.—A. C. S.

[1] *Tristram and Iseult: Prelude of an Unfinished Poem*, which was included in *Pleasure: A Holiday Book of Prose and Verse*, London, 1871, pp. 45–52.

LETTER LXII

To Thomas Purnell

Tummel Bridge,
Pitlochry,
Aug. 24th, 1871.

My dear Purnell,

I shall be much honoured by the dedication of your book, and am very much pleased at your having thought of me on the occasion. I will see that you get back the book you lent me—I had, in fact, forgotten whence or how it came into my hands. I have some thoughts of publishing separately, in some magazine, the Prelude to my unfinished poem of *Tristram and Iseult*—itself a separate poem of some considerable length and importance, being several hundred lines long, I think I should ask not less than £50 from the English Magazine in which it would appear; and I should like it to appear simultaneously in America, so as to secure the profits there, whatever they might be. Could you manage this for me? And if so, what do you think I ought to expect from the Yankees?

Ever yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

I am staying here for two or three weeks in the Highlands with the Master of Balliol, and find it very refreshing and good for the health, having a good river to swim in and good heights to climb. Browning is our near neighbour, and within distance of exchanging visits.

A. C. S.

LETTER LXIII

To Thomas Purnell

Holmwood,
October 10th, [1871].

Private.

Dear Purnell,

I was obliged to come down here more hastily than I had expected, having been very unwell for a day or two, and some fool and rascal having (unknown to me) *again* terrified my people here with news that I was risking health, etc., in town, and must be looked after—so my father came up and carried me off, literally out of bed, having a doctor's word that I wanted country air. I told him I had business (meaning with you) of immediate importance to keep me in town or bring me back at once. So if I am wanted I must try—being

now pretty well—to see you : but I suppose we can in fact arrange by letter quite as well ? I have only to repeat that I leave the choice of magazine entirely in your hands, and am very glad to hear you have settled with America.

Any cheque or other missive will be sure (as usual) to find me here.

Yours ever,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXIV

To Frederick Locker

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
November 7th, 1871.

My dear Locker,

If the printer wants the type I suppose he must have it. I have carefully corrected the revise ; but, of course, as you must see, it would be preposterous to think of publishing a fragment of a Play. Also I may not improbably recast and rewrite part of it. I said before that I had no view of finishing it soon. It will be taken up when I am "so dispoged," as Mrs. Gamp says, and continued slowly at my leisure. Very likely, as I told you, it may be years in

hand before it is (if ever it be) completed to my liking and satisfaction. I have put the MS. by carefully for you, and you shall have it when you please; but as yet I may want it for reference on revising.[1] Many thanks for your offer of Baudelaire's letter. Of course I should like to see it very much, but I should hardly like to rob your collection of it. I have his inscription to me of a copy of his pamphlet on Wagner.

With best remembrances from my father.

Ever yours truly,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXV

To Frederick S. Ellis

Tummel Bridge,
Pitlochry,
N.B.
July 18th, [1872].

Dear Sir,

Thanks for your note received to-day. I write now to tell you that Mr. Jowett has just pointed out to me a frightful slip of the pen in the Greek verses at p. 61 of my pamphlet.[2]

[1] Swinburne duly preserved the MS., but Locker never received it. It remained at The Pines until the poet's death, when it was sold by Watts-Dunton to Mr. Wise.

[2] *Under the Microscope*, 1872.

The very first word, πολλὸς, ought of course to be πολὺς. It is a slip for which a schoolboy would be flogged, and how it came to escape not only my eye, but yours, Mr. Burne Jones's, and Mr. Gibson's, both good Greek scholars, who saw the passage before publication, I cannot imagine. Now, though (as the Professor of Greek says) it is too late to hope for escape from the comments of *The Saturday Review* (for instance), if that esteemed journal should notice the pamphlet, or my solecism, I must beg that a slip of errata may be at once inserted in all remaining copies, and that when the second batch of copies is made up and the misprints at pp. 32 and 72 removed by cancelling those pages as we agreed on, this page also may be cancelled; meantime, at any rate I must have the errata inserted in every copy to be sold henceforward. The list should run thus:

Page 32, last line but one, for *monsieurs* read messieurs.
„ 61, line 19, for πολλὸς read πολὺς.
„ 72, „ 18, for Hugos' read Hugo's.
„ do. „ 19, for Brownings' read Browning's.

It seems a very small thing, but coming where it does, it is very vexatious to me; and Professor Jowett is of opinion with me that the best and indeed the only thing to be done is, though late, to correct it at once by this the only means left. So I must beg you to see that it is done

with all the copies in hand, whether at your place or at the nominal publisher's.[1]

I remain,

Yours very truly,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXVI

To Lord Morley

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames,
November 21st, 1872.

MY DEAR MORLEY,

I have sent off my notice of Nichol's poem[2] to the printer by to-day's post, so I trust it may be in time for the *December* number. I

[1] The "nominal publisher" of *Under the Microscope* was Mr. David White. The actual publishers were Messrs. Ellis and White. Mr. Ellis had been asked to publish the pamphlet by, or at the suggestion of, D. G. Rossetti. But for some reason (probably because of his objection to the afterwards-cancelled passage regarding Tennyson) Mr. Ellis did not wish to assume the responsibility of issuing the pamphlet. Just at that time the negociations for a partnership between Mr. Ellis and Mr. White had been completed; but, yielding to the strongly expressed wish of the former gentleman, the latter consented to the appearance of his own name alone upon the title-page.

[2] Swinburne's Review of John Nichol's *Hannibal* appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* for December, 1872.

am much flattered by what you tell me about the Princess Orloff, and still more interested. She must be a person of most commendable tendencies, and deserving of every encouragement.

The cheque you speak of, whatever its amount may be, will be most welcome when paid into Hoare's, as I am at present in a fair way to be pressed to death (like the contumacious *comprachico* in *L'Homme qui Rit*) by unpaid bills, which really worry me out of power to work at all regularly or comfortably, and so earn wherewith to discharge them.

My poem on Gautier is in a metre which I may call "quarta rima"; in corresponsive quatrains like those of my *Laus Veneris*, except that there the 3rd line of the 1st quatrain rhymes with the 3rd of the 2nd, and so on to the end, whereas here the musical scheme is at once more connected and more complicated; for the 3rd line of every quatrain rhymes with the 1st, 2nd, and 4th lines of the next. The metrical effect is, I think, not bad, but the danger of such metres is diffuseness and flaccidity. I perceive this one to have a tendency to the dulcet and luscious form of verbosity which has to be guarded against, lest the poem lose its foothold and be swept off its legs, sense and all, down a flood of effeminate and monotonous music, or lost and split in a maze of what I call draggle-tailed melody. I have written

108 lines, 27 quatrains; I expect it will be about 200 lines long in all. I am going over the part already thrown off to brace up the verses—tighten the snaffle, and shorten the girths of the Heliconian jade.[1] I hope to have it off my hands in a day or two.

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXVII

To THOMAS PURNELL

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
November 26th, [1872].

MY DEAR PURNELL,

Since I got your note asking for a "Stanza" for the *Athenæum* I have fallen in with one[2] among my unpublished MS. which I send you. As a rule I do not care to send any verse to newspapers or magazines under

[1] *Memorial Verses on the Death of Théophile Gautier*, printed in *The Fortnightly Review* for January, 1873, and afterwards included in *Le Tombeau de Théophile Gautier*, Paris, 1873, pp. 156–164.

[2] *Before Sunset*, printed in *The Athenæum* Nov. 30, 1872.

£10 or £20, not finding it worth while, and not wishing to have my name hawked about like that of a Close, Buchanan, or any other hack rhymester ; and I am not yet at all in good humour with the *Athenæum* for joining in the marked and utter neglect of a pamphlet[1] which I see they now find convenient to quote and borrow from, and on which, as a piece of critical prose, I value myself more than I usually do on any other improvisations in that line. But as the application comes through you I send what I have.

I am in very great want of tin just now, having overdrawn my account by half a year's allowance, and being overwhelmed by bills and dunning notes : particularly objectionable when one is £200 worse than penniless. I am at least that much behind the world, and *must* soon raise it somehow. Can you suggest any way ? Say by publishing somewhere the first canto of *Tristram* separately ? If the *Prelude* was worth fifty pounds, this ought to be worth at least three times as much. I must have a little money at once—a hundred or two—and surely my name must be worth something in the market. Give me what help or advice you can.

I see with disgust that King of Cornhill, who I was told was reputable, announces an edition

[1] *Under the Microscope*, 1872.

of R. Buchanan's works! Faugh—it will be impossible for men of honour and character to publish with him afterwards.

Yours ever,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXVIII

To Thomas Purnell

Holmwood,
December 12th, [1872].

My dear Purnell,

I write again to ask a little favour of you in the way of business which I hope it will not give you too much trouble to grant; if you cannot conveniently, I will ask Knight; but it is only to call for me on a legal friend who is now settling my affairs with Hotten either at his office, 18, Bedford Row, or at the hotel where he puts up, The Old Bell, Holborn, some evening after seven—or to make an appointment to meet him at any place convenient to yourself at the same time of day. You may probably know Mr. Watts, as several of our common friends are friends of his. He and I were introduced by Madox Brown, and he has

been most kind and serviceable to me. He says in a letter just received: A discussion between a *practical* literary man and myself of your affairs with Hotten, would I think be advantageous—especially as the question is so mixed up with that of selecting the best publisher for you. This discussion would be sure to run to some length—indeed, to be satisfactory, it must be so, and had better be done after business hours. Now you and Knight are about the only *practical* literary men I call my friends—and I write first to you because you kindly managed for me last year about the *Prelude* with Mr. King—who now seems disposed to undertake negotiations with me or my representative: and Mr. Watts seems to think, in spite of his purchase of Strahan's stock, he will be altogether the most desirable man to come to terms with.

Send me one line to say if you can do this for me, and in that case write a line to Mr. Watts, giving him two days' notice.

Ever yours,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

P.S.—Many thanks for the despatch of the verses[1]—I suppose there is no fear of their

[1] *North and South*, printed in *The Fortnightly Review*, May, 1873.

being *before* their time and ante-dating the appearance of the *Fortnightly?* I would not, on any account, have any dispute or misunderstanding in that quarter, but what I can get of American profit I cannot afford to throw away.

LETTER LXIX

To Sir Sidney Colvin

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 18th, 1873.

My dear Colvin,

Will you pardon the trouble I give if I apply to you about the enclosed dedicatory sonnet which I propose to prefix to my *Bothwell* when completed? I want before issuing it to have the opinion of some Frenchman who shall be qualified to judge of a matter of poetic execution, and I know none such to whom I wish to apply as I do not care to have it seen by Hugo himself or circulated among his set before the appearance of the poem; whereas I know that you have among your acquaintance just such 'Parnassiens' as might do me the service of giving sentence. I think it on the

whole one of the best sonnets I have written; but wanting to make it as good as I can, I am not quite certain which to prefer of several readings in different lines. In the second line, is the phrase—'vos mains d'où *le vers* tonne et luit'—the right one, in your opinion? I like it myself, but in so short a poem and on such an occasion I do not want any phrase to have a look of oddity or audacity. In the next line, is 'Tout ce que mon livre a de,' etc., not better than 'Tout ce qu'a mon esprit,' as I had thought of writing? 'Drame' might be better than 'livre' but for the jar and jingle with the word 'flamme' at the end of the line. In the 7th verse I like 'Son jour—qui luit comme une lame' better than 'brilliant comme,' etc., in spite of the repetition from line 2 of the word 'luit' which does not I think jar on the ear with the preceding rhymes in -uit, coming just where it does in the verse: but if objected to, it might be supplanted as above. I suppose 'apparue' may pass as a tolerable rhyme to 'abattue'; any better rhyme that I can think of (such as 'vêtue') could not be substituted without more sacrifice of idea than gain in sound. In the penultimate line I am not sure which of these two readings is preferable—

'Fleur éclose au sommet du siècle'
'Fleur rouge éclose au sein du siècle'

or for 'au sein' one might read either 'au bord' or 'au fond.' I fear you can hardly say —or can you?—'éclose en haut du siècle.' It looks and sounds wrong, but I know that in writing prose or verse good grammar sometimes seems to me for the minute bad, and bad good (I don't know if you ever feel this in passing, or are too good a scholar), though I am not conscious of being capable like Shelley of writing 'the verdure which embrac*est*'![1] I am afraid these verbal frivolities will tax your patience, but I want a word of counsel as to the execution of the sonnet. I wrote it last night before going to bed, and have just copied it out. I have had a very courteous note from the publisher M. Lemerre, who tells me he hopes to have the 'Tombeau' out by the end of this month. I hope to heaven they will not make such *pie* of the Greek accents as I find English printers usually do. Meantime I am not minded —I wonder whether the Master will be, as he was in the case of Saint Arnaud?—to bestrew with any funeral flowers the new tomb at Chislehurst.

Yours very truly,
A. C. Swinburne.

[1] "*To the trunk thou interlacest*
Art the verdure which embracest . . ."
[Scenes from Calderon, iii, lines 58–59].

I have just thought of another variation for verse 8—

'La mer { aux flots { montants / humains ; aux mille flots qui ronge, brise et fuit, ; au flot fatal }'

but I don't know whether if in any of these forms it is an improvement or not.

LETTER LXX

To Charles Augustus Howell

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 30th, 1873.

My dear Howell,

I am in want once more of your friendly help in *re* Hotten.

You will see by the two sheets of letter from Mr. W. T. Watts (who is now acting for me as my lawyer, and whom I believe you know as a friend common to us two and the Rossettis), which I enclose, that he is still endeavouring to put obstacles in the way of my transferring my books to Chapman and Hall on the plea that

I made over to him my copyrights in perpetuity by verbal contract. I have sent Watts the notes referred to, taken by W. M. Rossetti, with an an extract from a letter in which W. M. R. mentions the agreement drawn up by you for me in 1866, and sent to me at Lord Lytton's (I was sorry to hear of the poor man's death, though I had not heard from him for years). But you who managed for me about the *Songs before Sunrise* know all about it better than I do, and can assure Watts of the non-existence of any contract, verbal or written, binding me in any way to Hotten. This is of course confidential, between ourselves, and I send you Watts' own writing that you may see exactly what is our immediate difficulty. Please return his letter at once. I do not send the last sheet as it refers to other matters, except that he says "Hotten means fight if he can fight. These minutes will shew whether he can or not"—referring I suppose to W. M. Rossetti's notes which I have sent him by this post, though they only refer to financial matters—what should be the profit due to me on the number of copies sold?

I do hope you will be able to call. Make an appointment at 15 Great James Street without delay, and give us what help you can in the way of verification of statements. You see without my telling, by Watts' own expressions, how urgent

it is on all accounts that no time should be lost in extricating me from these impediments.

There are also other matters connected with Hotten about which I want your advice—books of mine in his hands, and papers *not* relating to this matter. I always look to you in need to manage for me, and have never found you wanting. But this matter of publishing rights is all-important to me, and must be settled with no more of this most harassing and expensive delay.

I adjure you to come to the rescue of suffering virtue in my person against prosperous vice in Hotten's.

And am ever,
Yours affectionately,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXXI

To Charles Augustus Howell

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
February 6th, 1873.

My dear Howell,

A thousand thanks for your most prompt and kind help, which was the more necessary as

I must confess to you in confidence that I had utterly forgotten till you mentioned it the very name of Thomas, and have yet but the haziest possible idea as to his intervention in the matter of my qualified "reconciliation" with Hotten. The matter in all its details has so utterly dropped or been washed and wiped out of my memory that I retain merely the assured conviction that never did I at any time in any way give to Hotten the hold upon my copyrights which he ventures to claim. I wish you would write me a word reminding me of the circumstances referred to. Partly from constant ill-health and suffering when in London of late years, partly from other multiplying and distracting subjects for occupation, my recollection on such points is now quite misty. I never did take the pains I might have done to engrave on my mind and retain in my memory such details of business or other matters as would not naturally fix themselves there; and consequently mind and memory want rubbing and refreshing from without before they can see clearly.

As to books of mine in Hotten's possession I have no difficulty in remembering. When he told me he meant to publish Chapman's Works if I would prefix to his edition a Critical Essay, which I undertook to do, I lent him for that purpose, purely to save him trouble and facilitate the issue of an accurate text, all the early

copies in my possession of any of that poet's works—some of these of great rarity and value—which otherwise he could only have procured a sight of at the British Museum. For years I have neither seen nor heard anything of the projected edition, or of my books, for which I now wish that I had taken security from Hotten, as Lord Houghton did before lending him his Blake. I want to know whether the necessary transcripts are not now made, and in any case to reclaim my property, which I certainly did not contemplate parting with for five or six years without either consideration or security, when out of pure goodwill to his undertaking I freely offered him the loan of it.

I may add that I am more than willing, I am desirous, to remain on amicable terms with Hotten in the act of withdrawing from my business connection with him, in spite of the considerable trouble and expense to which he has put me by advancing and supporting utterly groundless and unjustifiable claims on my property in my own writings. As I have never had to bring, and assuredly never have brought, any charge against him of dishonest dealing during the date of that connection, I see no reason why we should part on hostile terms, or why, for instance, I should cease to deal with him as of old in his bookselling capacity because I see fit to put an end to my relations with him

as a publisher. It is probably not worth while to touch at all on so small a matter, but in full confidence I may do so to a friend with whom I have been for years on such intimate and brotherly terms as yourself. I think he may have some papers relating to me in the mass of his collection, of which an unscrupulous man might possibly make some annoying use. You know that we have all of us—and most especially myself—no lack of verminous enemies who would be glad of any secret handle, though never so slight, for the throwing of fresh dirt. I am as indifferent to this as any man, and to all who know me I think I may flatter myself that I have given tolerably good proof of my indifference and equanimity on such points; but I should of course not like any scrap *signed* with my name, which, in the dirty hands of a Grub Street libeller, might be turned to ridicule, or to any calumnious or vexatious purpose, to fall into such hands if such an accident could be avoided. Neither Hotten, nor for that matter any man alive, has in his possession anything from my hand for which I need feel shame or serious regret or apprehension, even should it be exposed to public view; but without any such cause for fear or shame, we may all agree that we shrink, and that reasonably, from the notion that all our private papers, thrown off in moments of chaff or Rabelaisian exchange of

burlesque correspondence between friends who understand the fun, and have the watchword, as it were, under which a jest passes and circulates in the right quarter, should ever be liable to the inspection of common or unfriendly eyes.

I am making gradual way with *Bothwell*, but am yet far from sight of harbour. My comfort is that if ever accomplished according to my design the book must either be an utter failure, and still-born, or else not merely by far the greatest work I have done (being for proportion and conception out of all comparison with *Atalanta*, in weight and importance as well as width and variety of work), but a really great poem, and fit to live as a typical and representative piece of work. But for Hotten I should have been at work on it all the time I have now spent on this long scrawl.

Pardon the trouble it will have given you, and believe me,

Yours affectionately,
A. C. Swinburne.

P.S.—I hope I may conclude from your note that you have left Watts fully satisfied, not merely of the justice, but also of the complete security and easy proofs by irrefutable evidence of the justice of our view of the business, without need or possibility of litigation to establish or to impugn it?

LETTER LXXII

To Lord Morley

Holmwood,
April 11th, [1873].

My dear Morley,

As you like the last poem I sent you,[1] can you suggest any better name for it, or does the one already given satisfy you? I can think of nothing better, but I don't much like it. The *names* of the flowers would make far too ponderous and polysyllabic a title for anything under a South Sea Idyl or epic. By the by, do you spell the first name laur*u*stinus or laur*e*stinus? I thought it was the first, and in the only verse where I remember ever to have seen the shrub mentioned I am sure that Browning writes "arbute and laur*u*stine"; but the ladies of my family insist that it is laur*e*stinus or -tine. *Grande certamen!*

I admire and enjoy Pater's work[2] so heartily that I am somewhat shy of saying how much,

[1] *North and South*, printed in *The Fortnightly Review* for May, 1873.

[2] This refers to Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, 1873.

ever since on my telling him once at Oxford how highly Rossetti (D. G.) as well as myself estimated his first papers in the *Fortnightly*, he replied to the effect that he considered them as owing their inspiration entirely to the example of my own work in the same line ; and though of course no one else would dream of attributing the merit to a study of my style of writing on such matters, I suppose, as Rossetti said, that something of the same influence was perceptible in them to him, there is just such a grain of truth in the pound of compliment as to impede the free expression of all my opinion as to their excellence. But in effect they seem to me throughout as full of original character and power as of grace and truth. The unconsciously theological sound of those last words—inspired perhaps by the natural influences of this sacred season—reminds me to ask what you think of Arnold's *Literature and Dogma?* (by the by I should have said there was more of *his* style than of mine traceable in Pater's). I am personally delighted that a critic hitherto regarded as so safe and moderate a free thinker, when compared with "such as this republican," should, while dwelling so warmly on the value and significance of the Bible, have so distinctly repudiated that most objectionable "Person," the *moral and intelligent* governor of the universe. I do not despair of seeing the day when any reference to

the Bible as an authority will be equivalent, in the eyes of all respectable persons, to an open avowal of atheism.

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXXIII

To JOHN CHURTON COLLINS

3, Great James Street.
October 14th, [1873].

MY DEAR SIR,

I am rejoiced to hear that you think of editing Cyril Tourneur, and shall look eagerly for the book, as I have done, since we met, for your intended article—in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, if I rightly remember. My own idea of doing anything in the matter was nipped in the bud by the refusal of the Society, under whose auspices Furnivall thought it possibly might appear, to reprint anything which had been previously reprinted, this being against their rule, so that both *Revenger's* and *Atheist's Tragedies* stood excluded. Do you know the rather scarce reprint of the latter in a volume of miscellaneous plays earlier (I think) than the first edition of Dodsley? But in any case, nothing would be more shocking to me than

the notion of any act or purpose of mine standing in your way when employed in so good a work.

I hope that, of course, your edition will include not merely the two already known tragedies, but the newly unearthed comedy with the wonderful title[1] which I cannot exactly remember. Furnivall gave me to understand that the proprietor was quite ready to allow his priceless *unique* to be at once reprinted—as it assuredly should have been before now. I would give something to see old Cyril's conception of a comedy—I can almost as easily imagine one from the pen of his sainted Alexandrian namefather. I suppose you can tell me nothing—I never met the man who could—of the *other* comedy attributed to C. T. by Lowndes, with the charming title of *Laugh and Lie Down*.[2] I was so delighted with the name that in my last Oxford year I wrote, in three days, three acts of a comedy, after (a long way after) the later manner of Fletcher, under that title; but I shall take good care that this one never sees the light![3] I suppose Lowndes must have had some authority

[1] *The Transformed Metamorphosis* (1600): it proved not to be a comedy, but a gnomic satire in stanzas.

[2] This also proved not to be a comedy, nor by Cyril Tourneur. *Laugh and Lie Down; or, The World's Folly* (1605) is a prose tract.

[3] The MS. of this comedy is still extant, and is in the possession of Mr. Wise. It is accompanied by the MSS. of two other unpublished plays by Swinburne belonging to the same period,—*The Loyal Servant*, a Tragi-Comedy in five Acts, and *The Laws of Corinth*, in two Acts.

—though I am not sure that he was never capable of entering (say) a pamphlet by Taylor the water poet as a play by Tourneur, on the Macedon-Monmouth principle. I suppose, of course, you will reprint Cyril's single poem? I did read years ago at the British Museum this "Monumental Column" of an elegy published together with Webster's and Heywood's, and think I thought it rather a good sample of that sort of official poetry,—but this may have been because I tried to think so.

I am troubling you with various "supposes" and suggestions which are probably officious and superfluous, but you will set it down to my interest in your subject. I heartily congratulate you on being the man chosen to revive—or as he seems to have had little enough in his own day, I ought perhaps to say confer for the first time his proper fame on one of the most original and keenly inspired among our dramatic poets.

I suppose you will have all the old editions to collate, but if a copy of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1608, in my possession would be of real service to you I will gladly lend it on such an occasion.

I suspect, however, that there may turn out to be but one edition, with the title-pages variously dated 1607–8–9.[1]

[1] Swinburne's conjecture was not correct. The editions of 1607 and 1608 are distinct. No 1609 edition seems to be known. *The Revenger's Tragedie* was reprinted in 1744 and 1780.

I returned to London a fortnight since, and am likely to be in town some little time. Is there any likelihood, if you should run up from Oxford, of my having the pleasure of seeing you or our friend Anderson in these rooms? In any case believe me

Yours very faithfully,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXXIV

TO LORD MORLEY

Holmwood,
December 16th, [1873].

MY DEAR MORLEY,

Many thanks for the cheque for £20 just received. I am, as you have heard, negotiating through a legal friend whom perhaps you know, Mr. Watts, a friend of Rossetti and others of my near friends, for the future publication of my works by Chapman and Hall. The terms offered by Mr. Chapman, he writes, are "the most liberal he has heard of"; the details I have not yet received, as he writes to know first of all whether I am "open to negotiate" with that firm. Mr. Chapman proposes to issue a cheap edition of my entire poems

in the same form as his cheap edition of Carlyle. I have written at once in reply, expressing my readiness to that. You might be of the greatest service to me in arranging terms as you kindly suggest—more I dare say even than Forster was to Dickens, who cannot have had worse luck than I have hitherto had with publishers. (By the by I am wroth with Forster for having as he says in his 2*d.* vol. mislaid a letter in which Dickens made mention of my infant self, as I should like to know what remarks he did make on me as a small and not usually good boy of 9 or 10 !) I don't know at all what sort of price I ought, as you say, to fix, and certainly do not want to be "too modest." When they have bought the stock now in the hands of others, which has to be done first, and accounts squared in those quarters, what should you say are about the terms I ought fairly to ask and expect in justice to receive? My ideas are still vague, and any help in the matter would be very valuable to me. I am working hard and steadily at my gigantic enterprise of *Bothwell*, which dilates in bulk and material at every step. If ever accomplished, the drama will certainly be a great work in one sense, for except that translation from the Spanish of an improperly named comedy in 25 acts published in 1631, it will be the biggest I fear in the language. But having made a careful analysis of historical

events from the day of Rizzio's murder to that of Mary's flight into England, I find that to cast into dramatic mould the events of those eighteen months it is necessary to omit no detail, drop no link in the chain, if the work is to be either dramatically coherent or historically intelligible; while every stage of the action is a tragic drama of itself which cries aloud for representation. The enormity of the subject together with its incomparable capability (if only the strength of hand requisite were there) for dramatic poetry assures me, as I proceed, more and more forcibly of the truth which I suspected from the first, that Shakespeare alone could have grappled with it satisfactorily, and wrung the final prize of the tragedy from the clutch of historic fact. But having taken up the enterprise I will not at least drop it till I have wrestled my best with it.

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXXV

To Edmund Clarence Stedman

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 21st, 1874

My dear Mr. Stedman,

I have just received your letter with the very graceful stanzas for music enclosed in it, announcing and accompanying the gift of the beautiful volume of selections from Landor; for all which I thank you at once most sincerely, as also for what I have *not* received—possibly through some misdirection or miscarriage which may yet be rectified—the note of two or three months since containing your article on Landor, which I should much like to see.

I congratulate you with all my heart at having done that article Fate disappointed my once cherished hope of doing. As the property of Landor's works is vested (I understand) in his friend and biographer Mr. Forster, who told me a good many years ago that he designed himself to edit a selection from the verse as well as the prose, it is of course impossible for me to intrude on his ground, and would be

improper to solicit as a favour the leave which Mr. Browning has more than once, since he was informed of my original intention and the only reason which compelled me to resign it, kindly offered to procure for me from Mr. Forster ; whose selection, when it does appear, will, I hope, be an improvement on the system of extracts given in his biography of Landor : which was not, I think, a very judicious example of the representation of a great writer by specimens and excerpts.

I am truly and deeply gratified by the great honour which you have done me in prefixing to your selection verses which I only wish were worthier of the high place assigned to them than I can honestly hope or believe them to be. I never thought them adequate to the subject in any way except perhaps as an expression of personal feeling, which may be thought to give them their only worth to which they can pretend ; but their inadequacy is now more potent and flagrant in my own eyes than ever : though this does not diminish my pleasure in seeing them, or my sense of obligation to you for placing them, at the head of your beautiful anthology ; from which I only regret to miss two or three of my especial favourites among the glorious multitude of flowers from which you have chosen so many and so well : for example, the "one white violet" (on E. Arundell), a fit companion

to *Rose Aylmer*, as a flower of life might be to one of death; the "cistus"—

Smoothen thy petals now
Her Floral Fates allow;

the two on the deaths of Ternissa and Epicurus ("*Ternissa! you are fled!*" and "*Behold, behold me, whether thou*," etc.); the quatrain beginning "*To my ninth decade I have tottered on*"—unless rejected as too painful to students who love his memory; the palinode or recantation (so to call it) of the *Epitaph at Fiesole*—

Never must my bones be laid
Under the mimosa's shade;

and the lofty and pathetic "expostulation" of Sappho—"*Forget thee? When? thou biddest me? dost thou?*"

But, above all, I wonder to find wanting the very brightest (in my eyes at least) of all the jewels in Landor's crown of song; the divine four lines on *Dirce*, which hold the place in my affections that those on *Rose Aylmer* did in Lamb's—

Stand close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat conveyed
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old and she a shade.

If ever verses besides her own were, in Sappho's phrase, "more golden than gold," surely these

are. I looked again and again through your book in search of them, unable to believe that I had not at first accidentally passed over the page which they should have glorified. There is the whole Anthology—all of it, I mean what is really composed of flowers—distilled in its essence into that one quatrain. These too, I think, might have found a place among their followers :—"*The leaves are falling ; so am I*" ; "*Ye little household gods, that make*," etc. "*Twenty years hence*" ; I think I am not wrong in saying that they are not among your Cameos, but I have not time to look again before the post goes out, and I do not wish to let one day pass without thanking you for the gift of them. I should like to send you in return, if the publisher had sent me any copies as I expected and as he hitherto has not, a book of memorial verses—*Le Tombeau de Théophile Gautier*—to which I have contributed ten little poems of the elegiac or ἐπιτυμβίδιον order—two in English, two in French, one in Latin, and five "Epigrams" in Greek after the Anthologic pattern—a polyglot freak which has not been emulated by the other contributors in French, English, Italian, German, and Provençal and other dialects. Lemerre has published it in a very pretty form, and Victor Hugo heads our list superbly. (I should like to have seen in your selection Landor's late verses to him, and those earliest of all, which

I have just remembered, written at school on Godiva, and worth all that have been written on her since, however exquisite—*In every hour, in every mood.*)

I trust you will prosper in the good and enviable work of diffusing among Americans the knowledge and love of Landor—they must be one with all readers worthy to know him. Pray remember me very kindly to Mr. Stoddard, and believe me,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXXVI

To EDMUND GOSSE

3, *Great James Street,*
W.C.
February 21st, [1874].

MY DEAR GOSSE,

I have received the enclosed somewhat impertinent reply to my application.[1] As you know, it *is* the first time I have applied for a new Print-room ticket, and the second time for a reader's. What may be the meaning of an *irregular* renewal I cannot imagine. This insolent and vexatious system of petty annoyances (for precautions they are not) is beyond all

[1] To the British Museum.

endurance, and, as Dante said of Florence, if I can only get in by such a door as this I must remain outside.

Your review yesterday was excellent towards me, but I do think very unjust to Chapman—above all to the great cycle of French "Histories" which overflows with genius. Still, you gave me real and great pleasure (not for the first time) and I thank you sincerely. Can I hope to see you in a day or so? I have a dozen things to talk to you about: but my eyes are sore with sleeplessness, and I have endless letters, etc., to answer.

I am very well, very busy, and very cross.

Yours affectionately,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXXVII

To Edmund Clarence Stedman

Holmwood,
Henley on Thames.
February 23rd, 1874.

My dear Mr. Stedman,

I have so much to say in answer to your last despatches that I fear I may be tempted to exceed at once the bounds of the post and the limits of your patience if I write

at such length as I wish we could talk together. First of all, even before Thanksgiving, let me say that in my opinion you have written[1] the very best study containing the very truest estimate of Landor's genius that has ever yet been achieved. The only drop of qualifying bitterness in the pleasure with which I read and re-read it rises from the regret that it could not have come nine years before instead of after he went back to the Olympians; for I remember well how pleasant and how precious, for all his high self-reliance and conscious *ἀυτάρκεια*, the sincere tribute of genuine and studious admiration was even at the last to the old demigod with the head and the heart of a lion. I have often ardently wished I could have been born (say but five years) earlier, that my affection and reverence might have been of some use and their expression found some echo while he was yet alive beyond the rooms in which he was to die. The end was very lonely, and I fear the last echo of any public voice that reached him from England must have been of obloquy and insult. It is true that the lion at whom those asses' kicks were aimed was by no means maimed or clipped as to the claws and teeth. Did you ever see his vindication printed, but I believe not published, after the wretched affair which ended in his angry departure from

[1] In *Victorian Poets*, pp. 33–71 of the edition of 1887.

England? It was trenchant and conclusive, including as it did a letter addressed to himself from the father of the young lady to whom his fatherly goodness and charity had been made the pretext for abuse and slander, thanking him in the most fervent terms of gratitude for the rescue of his daughter from the society of the swindlers among whom she had fallen, and the restoration to her own family through Landor's generous kindness. This (as perhaps you know) was the upshot of the whole matter; only after this the dear old Titan could not contain his divine wrath within the limits of Latin verse, but must needs burst into English to express his opinion of the woman who had first solicited his charity on behalf of a young lady cruelly persecuted and cast off by her own parents—and, having found that charity ready as ever, had appropriated it to her own use; and lastly, on being detected and disgraced, had responded to the charge of fraud alternately by tears and prayers to be let off without public exposure and infamy, and by threats to make the charity of a man of eighty-three the ground of a charge almost more absurd than it was villainous. After such an experience of more than a thief's treachery supported by more than a strumpet's impudence, a milder temper than that of the victim whose pockets had been picked and whose character had been defamed, might have

been expected I think to explode to some purpose—above all, at the last rascally attempt to terrify "one who never feared the face of man" into silence and acquiescence in the robbery through dread of a lying imputation.

Possibly you may know all this as well as I, but I have found very few even among the professed friends of Landor's memory who either knew or cared to remember the exact facts of the case; and Forster in his biography has slurred the question over, as I cannot but think, with caution something more than legal and less than friendly. It is a shame that the most faithful and generous in his friendships of all men should have none to speak out for him now without shakings of heads or hushings of voice, as though to lament the existence of some deplorable and unmentionable thing, when, as I do most truly believe, the only point in his conduct regrettable and possibly blamable was the substitution of English for Latin and print for manuscript in the expression of a just and honourable anger. If he could but have been content this time also, as so often before, with the sufficiently copious and vigorous repertory of terms to be found in the language of Martial and Catullus! I did not mean to write so much on this matter, but if you do not know the details it is well that you should, and even if you do you will excuse the unpleasant

repetition for the love of Landor's memory which I know that you share with me. I send you his Italian dialogue of *Savonarola*[1] which had never been published; it was prohibited in Italy I believe through priestly influence, and the edition remained on his hands in sheets. This is one of the copies of which he gave me as many as I wished to take away; so that you receive it, as it were, at one remove from his own hand, having only passed through mine. You will be amused to see his unquenchable prejudice (if prejudice it be, in which I confess to some share, though without knowledge enough to go upon) against Plato breaking out in the most quaintly incongruous time and place; but it is a noble "last fruit" of the Italian branch of that mighty tree. He told me that he thought he wrote Italian quite as well as English; I should not presume to say that I thought he did or did not.

Browning has some of Landor's unpublished MSS. that he has promised to show me some day, of which one must be especially interesting; an "Imaginary Conversation" on the personal immortality of the soul between themselves and two other friends, in which the interlocutors take up different grounds for attack or defence of a doctrine of a future state. As I have not seen it I cannot say what sides are taken by

[1] Privately printed (8vo, pp. 7) in 1860.

what interlocutors; but of course I presume that Browning is not made to forsake the support of his cherished dogma. (This is, of course, merely my own conjecture expressed in confidence.) Landor himself, I know from his own lips, had no belief or opinion whatever on the subject; "was sure of one thing," he said, "that whatever was to come was best — the right thing, or the thing that ought to come"; I give the exact sense, if not the exact phrase. I think I may say that he would have agreed with me that any matter so utterly incognizable is one on which it is equally unreasonable to have or to wish to have an opinion. Browning is also the happy possessor of a copy of *The Phocæans*,[1] which I have never seen and want to read.

You are wrong, by the bye, about the date of the first collected edition of Landor's English poems; a volume including *Gebir*, *Count Julian*, *Ines de Castro*, *Ippolito di Este*, and *Miscellaneous Poems*, was published by Moxon in 1837—five years before the first collected edition of Tennyson. I have his first volume, for which I gave two guineas, *Poems*, English and Latin, 1795; it contains a good deal besides satire, tho' that is perhaps its best part, and the *Epistle to Lord*

[1] *From the Phocæans* was printed in *Poetry by the Author of Gebir*, 1802, pp. 12–36, a scarce book, of which Browning possessed a fine copy which had been given to him by Landor.

Stanhope, which I have also, *is*, I think, "something remarkable for a boy of nineteen," singularly polished and vigorous. You see by my cavillings how carefully I have looked into your essay from all points. I have barely room to thank you for the others, both of which I have read with much interest, and to add that I send you by this post my own copy of the *Tombeau de Théophile Gautier*, as I should like my share in that book to come under the eyes of an American poet and scholar with at least *some* of the mispunctuations, &c., corrected which would have drawn some thunder and lightning from Landor on the head of the French printer and all his nation. As among so many contributors there is of course great inequality, I have taken on myself to mark the best among the contents; there are pretty verses elsewhere, but those I have marked are really fine pieces of workmanship. Against one expression I could not resist setting a note of admiration as the most hopelessly unintelligible piece of jargon I ever saw in any language, and written on the most luminous of all poets!

I see you share the general opinion as to the "utter uselessness" of modern Latin (and a portion I suppose of modern Greek) verses; I think it depends on the execution. Good verse of any kind at any time is a good thing, and a change of instrument now and then I

think is good practice for the performer's hand. I certainly care very little about the matter, and should never think seriously of claiming place or notice for any but my English or French poems (the latter I do consider part of my serious work) ; but Landor was so much pleased with my first copy of elegiacs addressed to him that I might have some excuse if I were vainer of them than I think I am ; and my friend and former tutor Mr. Jowett, the Oxford Professor of Greek and Master of the leading college there, has expressed a very gracious and flattering approval of these on Gautier, and notably of the Latin choriambics. I confess that I take a delight in the metrical forms of any language of which I know anything whatever, simply for the metre's sake, as a new musical instrument ; and as soon as I can am tempted to try my hand or my voice at a new mode of verse, like a child trying to sing before it can speak plain. This is why without much scholarship I venture to dabble in classic verse and manage to keep afloat when in shallow water.

I hope the book (with Landor's pamphlet inside it) will reach you safely ; I shall be curious to know what you think of it ; and if there should be any notice taken of it in any American journal or magazine I should very much like to see it. (This really is not a hint or insinuated petition begging for such notice

at your hands or any one's, and must not be taken as such ; but I am curious about the fate of this book as a unique sort of production in these days, and take certainly a quite unselfish interest in its fortunes.) I am very glad you like my elegy on Baudelaire ; I wrote it with very sincere feelings of regret for the poor fellow's untimely loss, which gave it a tone of deeper thought or emotion than was called forth by the death of Gautier, with whom (though from boyhood almost his ardent admirer) I never had any correspondence ; but in spite of your kind mention of it in this month's *Scribner's Magazine*, which I have just seen, I cannot believe it worthy to tie the shoes (so to speak) of the least, whichever may be the least, of the great English triad or trinity of elegies— Milton's, Shelley's and Arnold's. I am content if it may be allowed to take its stand below the lowest of them, or to sit meekly at their feet.

I have just finished and am about at once to publish the longest and most important poem I have yet attempted — a historic drama of almost epic proportion ; but I have no time or room to try your patience further, and remain,

Yours very faithfully,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXXVIII

To John H. Ingram

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
March 6th, 1874.

Dear Sir,

I shall be glad to do what little I can to assist your project, and if my name is of any use to you it is at your service. But I know nothing practically of committees, and heartily agree with the disgust you express for the vulgar and fashionable parade of worthless pretensions for which they usually form an excuse.[1]

I fell in by chance with your first article some weeks ago, and must try to get the series when complete.[2] You will have done an immense service, not only to the memory of an

[1] Miss Rosalie Poe, the sister of the poet, being in great distress, had appealed to Mr. Ingram for aid. Mr. Ingram suggested the formation of a strong committee of literary men and women, under the shelter of whose names sufficient money might be obtained to provide a permanent endowment for the lady. Mr. (afterwards Lord) Tennyson, Mr. W. M. Rossetti, and others, promised assistance. However, before any practical steps could be taken, Miss Poe died.

[2] A series of articles on Edgar Poe, refuting the slanders of Griswold, his first biographer. They appeared in *The Mirror* (London), in 1873–4.

admirable poet, but to the consciousness of every one among the multitude of his admirers, which has hitherto perforce been harassed and fretted by the involuntary recollection, however tempered with contempt and loathing, of the villainous calumnies of Griswold. The dog is dead, I believe, is he not? or I should like to see combined with the immediate object of your committee, the scarcely less praiseworthy object of getting him cudgelled to death in default of a rope and gibbet. Among all his poisonous assertions there was but one—I hardly like to allude to it—which has always seemed to me, if one were compelled to believe it, inexplicable and intolerable, the rest even if true would not be damning accusations, or, however lamentable, beyond all excuse or comprehension of charity; I refer of course to the foul allegation of an attempt to extort money from a woman by threats of defamation in return for relief received, which were afterwards retracted under a counter threat of chastisement. Incredible as this vile story is, I have looked eagerly for a full and unanswerable refutation of it point by point, which I hope you will be able to give. I do not find it touched upon in your present or first article, indeed one is loath to touch such filth, but as long as what that polecat biographer has left behind him is not swept or shovelled away finally from the grave

of Poe, it must offend the nostrils of those who would come thither with offerings of another kind.

I cannot undertake to offer any suggestion as to the business part of your plans, but no doubt, as you have Mr. W. Rossetti with you, you will not want for more efficient help and alliance than mine. I wish indeed that poor Baudelaire were alive to see his own and instinctive contradiction of Griswold's villainies confirmed by evidence, and to give the help it would have rejoiced him to offer to the poor lady who remains to represent the name which he honoured and made famous throughout France by his own labours. Or, if Théophile Gautier were but alive, I daresay he might have answered to the appeal.

I should think something might be raised among the admirers of Poe in Paris, if anything is left of the old set of artists and authors who learned of Baudelaire to enjoy the genius of his favourite. I should think Mr. Frederick Locker might like to be of service ; have you applied to him ? I don't know whether he is in town ; if he were I would look him up, and Mr. Whistler, who might also help us for the sake of a fellow Southerner.

With best wishes for your success, and sincere congratulations on the good work you have already done for the long and grievously out-

raged memory of the first true and great genius of America.

Believe me,
Yours very truly,
A. C. Swinburne.

I am writing by this post to Mr. Morris, and have commended the matter to him as to one of Poe's truest and warmest admirers.

LETTER LXXIX

To John H. Ingram

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
March 10th, 1874.

Dear Sir,

I send you a line to convey my thanks for the great satisfaction given me by your answer to my question. The explanation both as to the nymphomaniac habit of body or mind which seems to have regulated the relations of the literary ladies with Poe, and (of course) as to the villainous mendacity of Griswold, is precisely such as I always looked for and hoped one day to obtain, as thanks to your kindness

I now have. I shall look forward with all the more interest to your forthcoming article in *Temple Bar*. I am also much obliged for the poem[1] you enclose, which reads to me more like the work of a disciple of Poe's than of his own hand. It has pretty lines, but none which have that peculiar melody scarcely ever wanting to even his crudest juvenile work.

A third reason for troubling you with this note is that I only remembered when too late an omission in my last letter. I think you ought to be secure of any help that may be in the power of Mr. R. H. Horne to give you, in recollection of Poe's most generous if most extravagant praise of him as a poet in the review of his *Orion*. I don't know the address of Mr. Horne, whom I met but once at Dr. Westland Marston's on one of the very rare occasions when I found myself in "literary" society. Of the "world of letters" I know personally so much less than little, that I can think of no further name known in it which might be suggested as useful for your purpose except Lord Houghton's, who, having just lost his wife, may not be in tune at present for any project of the kind; otherwise this is certainly one in which he ought and might be expected to take interest.

Do not trouble yourself, if too busy, to

[1] Some lines by A. Ide, an American writer, which had been attributed to Poe.

acknowledge this note of thanks, and believe me,

Yours very truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXXX

To Lord Morley

3, Great James Street,
Bedford Row,
W.C.
March 28th, [1874].

My dear Morley,

It is so long since I wrote to or heard from you that, as I cannot be sure of finding you at "Puttenham, Guildford" as of yore, I address to Chapman and Hall, who of course know where you are.

My *Bothwell* is now finished, and I should like you to see something of it before I ask you for counsel as to the arrangements about its publication. I don't know if it would be convenient for you to come here some evening early and hear as much of the mass of MS. as may be conveniently read out; but if it is, I would ask you to come and meet a few friends (of mine, and probably some of yours) to whom I should like to give a recitation, next week or that after.

The size of the book is as far as I can calculate almost exactly the length of *Philip van Artevelde* —*i. e.*, two average five-act plays in verse. This is the calculation of the Master of Balliol, the only person who has heard it or read it right through (except the 2 or 3 last scenes.) I want to have the proofs in readiness in order to send to him—as he has been a very close and useful critic of it in the rough ; and I should like to have his last suggestion, as I am sure the poem owes much to his former corrections. (It is difficult not to get *weedy* in a field of such size.) I would apologise for bothering you about my concerns, but that you were good enough, as was Jowett, to express an interest in the project of the work which has been for some years my chief occupation ; and without knowing something of it you could hardly know what to suggest as to the disposal—and since receiving your friendly note on the matter I have always looked forward to your assistance at the ultimate issue—so far as an opinion given of *what* I ought to *ask* (style Prudhomme) and *how*. But if you are too busy, don't let it trouble you for a minute, and say you can't, and I shall be not the least vexed ; only on good terms or bad for myself I *will* have the book out this spring and have it off my mind, and be able to apply that again to something else than Mary Stuart—who, if her sex were satiable, might I think, have been content with ruining

my ancestors by the simple process of making them give land and life for her, and not have exacted the best work of my brains as well as the last sacrifice of their heads.

I have just received from the Master (V. H.[1]) his photograph of this month by Carjat—very fine, but how much older he looks !

I read your January article on Mill's *Autobiography* with great care and great pleasure. I never had the honour to meet him, but ever since his *Liberty* came out it has been the text-book of my creed as to public morals and political faith.

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXXXI

To John H. Ingram

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
April 21st, 1874.

My dear Sir,

I do not know any one to whom I can advise you to apply on behalf of the Poe memorial volume. M. Mallarmé wrote to me some time ago in acknowledgment of the reference to

[1] Victor Hugo.

himself in my letter to Miss Rice, who has also written again and sent me a photograph of the singularly horrible monument. The only one durable and precious is that which I am sincerely delighted to hear that we may expect from you —a full and faithful memoir. Memoirs are generally as hateful to me as monuments, and both among the darkest terrors of death ; but in this case the poison already written on Poe's grave demands the full antidote which you have yet to supply. I congratulate you on the coming honour which must accrue from the completion of your noble task.

Have you seen the admirable version[1] of some of Poe's *Marginalia* appearing in the *République des Lettres ?* I saw some verses headed *Alone*[2] which seemed to me not unworthy on the whole of the parentage claimed for them. The "handwriting paper," you mention and your article on *Politian*, I have never received, and should much like to see—the article on *Politian*, especially, of which I only saw the advertisement which announced it as forthcoming—I forget where.[3]

I am glad Mr. Tennyson has sent a letter of sympathy to the Committee, it is a just and

[1] By Mallarmé.

[2] A juvenile poem attributed to Poe.

[3] Mr. Ingram's article on *Politian* appeared in *The London Magazine*, 1874.

graceful act of recognition on his part of one who was eager in doing homage to him.

As to the Byron monument I had from the first silently declined (though repeatedly solicited) to take part in an "inauguration" of which the present ruler of this Empire was to figure as the principal *aruspex;* not considering that whatever might be the defects or demerits of Byron's genius or character, they were grave enough on the whole to deserve that his memory should be subjected to the patronage of the author of the *Revolutionary Epic;* and had the memory thus oppressed been Shelley's, or any other of the very greatest poets—Milton's for instance, or Shakespeare's—nothing would have induced me to reconsider my point of view, considering what at best is like to be the upshot of such a plan. But when the one man who has been the friend of Shelley and Byron and is now on friendly terms with me had seen fit of his own accord, and moved merely by a sense of what was fitting or seemed so to him, to propose my name without my knowledge for election into the committee, of which the first intimation that I received was the announcement that (subject to my consent) I had already been elected a member, I could not of course reject the courtesy offered; but I accepted it wholly out of respect for Mr. Trelawny and in acknowledgment of the regard expressed by his proposal of my name—a regard which I

naturally would on no account have appeared to slight.

Yours very truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER LXXXII

To Lord Morley

3 *Great James Street.*
May 12th, [1874].

My dear Morley,

I believe Chatto has sent you the proofs[1] as desired before this, and I have told him to send you as soon as possible an early copy of the corrected text, which he tells me will be ready on Friday (not for publication till a week later, but for the reviewers, to the number of 50 copies) that if you make any quotation it may not appear with the printers' punctuation &c. instead of mine. I am half blind and half dead with correcting all these proofs in a space of four days. Was not that (in schoolboy parlance) a *grind*?

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] The "proofs" of *Bothwell.*

LETTER LXXXIII

To Lord Morley

3 Great James Street.
May 23rd, [1874].

My dear Morley,

I was rather disappointed at first to see that *Bothwell* was not to have a notice in *The Fortnightly Review* for June, as I thought it was in your own hands, and was naturally eager to read what you would say about it; but I could wait with the most perfect equanimity till Doomsday or the twilight of the gods for the lucubrations of the "worthy peer" into whose hands you have consigned it; for though of course I should really agreeably value the public (as I do the private) expression of your estimate of my work, I must confess that for Lord Houghton's opinion, and the private or public expression of it, I care rather less than nothing; though you need not tell him so! at least till his article is finished.

I need not repeat, to speak seriously again, how much satisfaction it gives me to know what you think of the work to which I have given my best powers and my most earnest labour of many months, during which I have resolutely kept my hand from any other task. If you speak of it in public anywhere, my satisfaction

will of course be all the greater. But meantime I cannot resist the temptation to say that I wish I had known before that you thought of giving Lord Houghton the position of my reviewer in the *Fortnightly*; as I should then, in defiance I doubt not of all etiquette, have requested you as a personal favour to me to give it in preference to any other writer alive—say Mr. Robert Buchanan. I have never shrunk from attack or from blame deserved or undeserved; but I must confess that I do shrink from the rancid unction of that man's adulation or patronage or criticism.

There is a M. Th. Michaelis just come to London as "representative of M. Victor Hugo" (I quote from the pencilling on his card left on me yesterday) with a letter from him to me which he very properly declined to leave on finding me gone out, and which of course when I have breakfasted I mean to rush after on the wings of a hansom.

Do you know anything of T. M.?

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXXXIV

To Richard Herne Shepherd

The Orchard,
Niton,
Isle of Wight.
July 10th, [1874].

Dear Sir,

I am very far from under-rating either the difficulties of your task, or the devotion to your author which must have impelled and sustained you in its discharge ; but I still think, having now before my eyes the revised copy of your text of Chapman's Plays as now published, that in the case of an author so obscure and difficult as Chapman at his best must always remain, even when all has been done that care and judgment can do, the corruptions and imperfections of the text should have been more fully noted (I do not say except in the more palpable cases corrected by the always hazardous method of conjectural emendation) and the patent and crying want of intelligible stage directions and lists of characters in some degree supplied. In the second play in the volume it is frequently impossible even for a careful reader to make out the speaker, the scene, or the sense,

and on these points at least we are accustomed to look for some help from a modern editor who aims at something higher than a mere reproduction in facsimile of the old text. I readily and gratefully admit that you have done much for Chapman ; but I cannot but think that much remains to be done. Meantime I sincerely congratulate you on the valuable and important discovery of the new text of *Hero and Leander*, of which I yesterday received the proofs from Mr. Chatto ; who, however, has not sent me the pages of the volume of *Poems* from 48 to 57, including, I suppose, the last part of *The Contention of Phillis and Flora*. Perhaps if you see him you will be kind enough to ask him to let me have these missing pages as soon as he can. I am very sorry to hear of your disappointment about *Eugenia*. I suppose of course you have tried the Bodleian and other public libraries ; have you enquired at Cambridge? I do not know if they are rich in books of that kind and period, but it might be worth looking after. It would be a great pity to leave the edition avowedly imperfect. Could—and would—Mr. Grosart, who I hear had thoughts of publishing Chapman's Poems on his own account before the present edition was announced as forthcoming, lend any help in the matter ? I observe three other items wanting in your list which seem to me desirable if not necessary for a com-

plete and critical edition of Chapman ; two plays attributed on very early (if not contemporary) authority to his hand—

(1) *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, printed in *The Old English Drama* (1820), but ought not to be reprinted from this text, but if possible from the original MS., which would add greatly to the critical and poetical value of your edition ;

(2) *Two Wise Men and all the rest Fools ;* omitted by Pearson as doubtful ; the more reason why it should appear now, at least in an appendix ;

(3) *A Satire on Ben Jonson*, quoted by Gifford (I think from the Ashmolean MSS.) in a note to his life of B.J., beginning "Great, learned, witty, Ben, be pleased to light," etc.

Yours sincerely,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXXXV

To Lord Houghton

The Orchard,
Niton, Isle of Wight.
July 12, [1874].

Dear Lord Houghton,

At the request (as you will see on reading it) of the writer, I forward to you this

letter just received from Mrs. Burton . . . I hope the next "bulletin" will announce an improvement in poor Burton's condition; the news startled as much as it pained me, who had heard no rumour of his illness. . . . I read your article [on "Bothwell"] in the *Fortnightly* with pleasure, but am not prepared to admit the superfluity of the part of Jane Gordon, which has been very considerably curtailed in order not to make the poem any longer than was absolutely necessary for the development of the general design; in which however the total omission of this short part would have made, I think, a sensible gap. Nor (like my brother dramatist, Sir Fretful Plagiary) can I subscribe to your objection raised against the parting menaces of the Queen as she embarks. This valediction was intended to mark the close of the last serious personal passion or private interest of the heart in all her life, and to enforce the position indicated throughout the poem which she holds as representative of the past—of monarchy and catholicism—at Knox, the only person then living of courage and intelligence equal to her own, is in effect, beneath the outer shell of Protestant bigotry, the prophet or at least the precursor of democracy and the popular spirit of the future.

Yours very truly,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXXXVI

To Richard Herne Shepherd

The Orchard,
Niton.
July 13th, [1874].

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for sending me the proof of pp. 48–54. I have now the volume complete up to p. 177. I am very glad to hear there is a chance of *Eugenia* turning up. I quite agree with you that the Homeric margination ought to be most carefully preserved. I have just purchased a beautiful copy of the small folio, without date, containing twelve books of the *Iliad* in Italic type; to which I am glad to see you have reprinted the noble *Epistle Dedicatory*, but not (to my regret) the curious metrical *Address to the Reader*, which follows it, nor the various *Sonnets* at the end of the volume, nor that to Queen Anne immediately prefixed to the translation. I should wish myself to see all the various versions of the *Iliad* published in parts before the completion of the work reprinted side by side, or at least all the different readings given and dated. This would add greatly to the value of the edition in the eyes of all serious students of English poetry; and to none others,

I suspect, will any edition of Chapman ever be likely to address itself with any chance of success.

I remain,
Your sincerely,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER LXXXVII

To Richard Herne Shepherd

The Orchard,
Niton,
Isle of Wight.
July 19th, [1874].

Dear Sir,

Thanks for the additional proofs. I see you (or the printer, is it?) put a query to the word renow*m*ed, which is right, being a genuine older form of renow*n*ed. I shall be obliged if you would send me the actual words of the contemporary account given of the offensive passage cancelled in Act 2 of *Byron's Tragedy*.[1]

[1] The most interesting, and by no means unimportant, textual variant to which Swinburne refers, may be observed upon making a comparison of different copies of the First, 1608, Quarto of *The Conspiracie and Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron.* The first of the two plays, *Byrons Conspiracie*, was withdrawn from the stage at the instance of the French Ambassador, and, together with the second play, *Byrons Tragedie*, underwent a compulsory emendation before being committed to the Press. Hence Chapman's plaintive reference to them as '*these poore dismembered Poems*' in his Dedication to the Walsinghams.

The fact and the reason for it I remember, but your note which takes for granted that all readers will have the story at their fingers' ends will be unintelligible as it stands to all but special students. I am happy to hear that you will give entire the first partial versions of the *Iliad;* it will add greatly to the value of the edition. I shall not attempt anything like a memoir of Chapman ; my design is simply to write a short critical essay on his genius and works, such as I have written before now on Byron and Coleridge (whose admirable remarks on the Homer, to which you advert, I know from of old, and shall probably refer to).

With renewed thanks,

Believe me, yours faithfully,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

In the first issued copies of the Quarto of 1608, at Sig. H 2 recto, the fifth line of Byron's speech reads :

So long as idle and ridiculus King[*s*].

In later issued copies of this Quarto the line reads :

So long as such as he.

The earlier and longer line, which is far more forcible, and is moreover metrically correct, is of course the true reading. Doubtless some nervous individual in the printer's office observed the line, and perceived the danger of its being stupidly regarded as a reference to His Sacred Majesty King James. Hence its removal, and the substitution of the weak half-line in its stead.

When reprinting his two tragedies in the Second Quarto of 1625, Chapman replaced the original reading [Sig. H 1 recto].

LETTER LXXXVIII

To Lord Morley

The Orchard,
Niton,
Isle of Wight.
July 20th, 1874.

My dear Morley,

I have read at last, under the right auspices of sea and sun and flowers and solitude, *Quatrevingt-Treize*, and am disposed to agree with you that it is (at least from some points of view) the most divinely beautiful work of the great Master, who has written me since I last heard from you such a letter in acknowledgment of the Dedication of *Bothwell* as I should like to shew you, but have not the face to transcribe or quote. Perhaps you know that we are promised *Les Quatre Vents de l'Esprit* for the autumn; if you can spare the post to anybody, I put in my appeal to be given (in default of yourself) the office of reviewing it—as far as may be possible.

I was on the whole agreeably surprised on reading Lord Houghton's notice of *Bothwell*. Tho' he writes to me that he wanted time and power to do it justice, I found it more thorough and careful (in a sort) than I expected. But if

you still retain any intention of noticing it, that will of course be a matter of very different interest and satisfaction to me.

I direct to Chapman and Hall to make sure of you, tho' I suppose "Puttenham, Guildford" would do as well? My own address is as above for two months to come.

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

P.S.—*Apropos de bottes*—have you read, and if so what do you think of, G. Flaubert's *St. Antony?* I have been reading it with very considerable interest and admiration.

LETTER LXXXIX

To —— MACKENZIE

The Orchard,
Niton,
Isle of Wight.
July 31st, [1874].

MY DEAR MACKENZIE,

Messrs. Chatto and Windus have forwarded to me here your note of the 22nd. I need not tell you how much I shall value the MS. you were kind enough to promise me. If you think it safe to send so far—and it is certainly too precious a thing to be lightly allowed

to run any risk—my address will be as above for the next six weeks. But, in the name of our common reverence and affection for Landor, let me conjure you not to inflict on me the discredit by anticipation implied in the title of future Laureate ; an office for which I expect to see all the poeticules of New Grub Street pulling caps after the death of Tennyson, till the laurel (or cabbage wreath) shall descend on the deserving brows of the Poet Close or the Bard Buchanan. For myself, I can only say of that office what Landor said—

> That inexpert was always I
> To toss the litter of Westphalian swine
> From under human to above divine.

With many thanks,
Yours ever sincerely in the faith,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XC

To Richard Herne Shepherd

The Orchard,
Niton.
Aug. 5th, [1874].

Dear Sir,

I am very much obliged by your kindness in forwarding to me your Memoir of

Chapman with the various prefaces of Messrs. Hooper and Elze. Of the latter editor's preface to *Alphonsus*, the pages 23, 24, have slipt out; perhaps you have the leaf by you: the gap occurs at an interesting point of this curious essay, which I should like to read in full.

I merely mentioned to Mr. Chatto that I did not know the date of Chapman's death, and thought it hardly worth while to trouble you with an express note on the matter. I am all the more grateful for the copious help you have sent me in reply. My acknowledgment of the leaf out of the Memoir sent before, I desired Chatto to make to you in my name. I shall be very happy to meet you if you have an opportunity of calling here this or next week, when I hope we make acquaintance in person over the text of the poet on whom we are at work in common.

Believe me, yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XCI

To Lord Morley

The Orchard,
Niton, Isle of Wight.
Aug. 19th, [1874].

My dear Morley,

Many thanks for your cheque and accompanying letter. I am like you enjoying sea and sun (though the latter has been capricious of late, and allowed such gusts and swells of bad weather that last week bathing off an unsafe shore I could hardly regain it, and even had I been drowned, as I reflected on regaining land in rather a spent condition, could not have enjoyed the diversion of reading the notices of my death in the papers, which is an unreasonable dispensation of an ungracious Providence). As for the sun's heat I bask in it, swimming or sitting; it is never too hot for me in summer and seldom too cold in winter; what I hate is the autumnal halfway house, *brumeux et suicidal.* Certainly I will send you copies of the Master's three letters to me since last spring (I received another here a week or two since in reply to one in which I told him of my design to complete the history of Mary Stuart); the first two I have not by me here. I have just written in much perturbation

as you will suppose to Paris for an account of his health, being much shocked and alarmed by yesterday's telegram of his accident. I trust as it seems he was able to walk home there can be no serious or dangerous injury. His man of business, Michaelis, has written to ask an odd thing of me as a favour—to write a preface to a forthcoming novel of a M. Cadol[1]—did you ever hear of him? It is flattering to the credit of one's name in Paris, but otherwise embarrassing.

I am busy with an elaborate essay on the poems and plays of Chapman to be prefixed to a forthcoming edition,[2] the first in which the poems have ever been collected; they have (even more than his translations) grievous faults & striking beauties. Also since I came here I have (for the first time I am ashamed to say) read the Iliad (Homer's, not Chapman's) fairly through without stopping from *a* to *w*: I found it and the sea keep time together perfectly in my mind's ear. I have written some fresh parcels of my "Tristram and Iseult" and hope to grapple with it steadily before long. I shall look impatiently for the October Macmillan. Thanks for the promise as to "Les Quatre Vents"; I can but do my

[1] Victor Édouard Cadol, born in 1831, was an abundant novelist and dramatist. He wrote also under the pseudonym of Paul de Margoliers. The novel Swinburne was asked to introduce was *Le Cheveu du Diable*.

[2] Edited by R. H. Shepherd, and published in 3 vols. in 1875.

best, but for what I expect in *that* book I fear it will be but a beggarly best. From what I hear it ought to have at least four articles in each review, one to each division.

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XCII

To RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD

The Orchard,
Niton.
Aug. 19th, [1874].

DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your kind present of books, and also for Mr. Collier's list. I am delighted to find that with one exception he has failed to trace any of those extracts which I could not verify, and surprised to find that he has failed to trace two or three which I have verified in no more recondite poem than *Hero and Leander*. I would send you my corrections of the text of the poems, to which I made sundry additions only this morning; but the trouble is that it would be useless to send the proofs as they stand, as I have only had time to correct one error of punctuation in a thousand. No page is free from misplaced, omitted, or superfluous stops, commas, parentheses, etc. To make

the text readable the pointing would have to be remodelled throughout. If I have time to finish doing this for *The Shadow of Night*, I will send you that sheet as an example. I shall be glad to see the *Two Wise Men* and will let you know at once what I think of it. As to *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, my verdict is decidedly for insertion.

Faithfully yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XCIII

To Richard Herne Shepherd

The Orchard,
Niton.
Aug. 25th, [1874].

Dear Sir,

I have, as you will perceive, carefully read through the voluminous MS. you were good enough to send me, correcting one or two slips and adding one or two queries and conjectures: and my final opinion is that you will do well to include this curious quasi-dramatic tract or pamphlet in the *Appendix*, and that you did well to exclude it from the list of Chapman's Plays. I think your suggestion that a confusion of the title with that of *All Fools* may have originated the attribution of it to Chapman is

very probably as correct as it is certainly ingenious. But in any case the book, never having been reprinted, has a double value as a curious study of manners, and as having been attributed to Chapman by such early tradition (Langbaine writing but 57 years after his death). I think therefore that most readers will agree with me that its insertion cannot but add to the value of your edition. I observe a curious detail, that several names in it are anagrams merely spelt backwards ; Mr. Eloc = Cole, Sir Retlaw = Walter, Pohssib = Bisshop, Boc = Cob, and others. Does this point to a personal attack ? The attack on female Puritanism (which has some humour, though exaggerated and too much spun out) is in spirit not unlike Chapman. But I cannot easily believe that it was written by a dramatist ; (to be sure, Chapman can be very *un*dramatic when he pleases ;) it seems rather the work of some Conservative pamphleteer, perhaps a Catholic, at least High Anglican. I am glad to have read it, but must be excused from believing that it was *divers times* (or ever, *acted* on any stage before any merely human audience with simply mortal powers of patience. There are several historical and social allusions worth nothing. I return also *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, which I have kept for a final reading, and marked in pencil some few errors in the punctuation and distribution of lines. It has much beauty, but

is more like Middleton in style than Chapman or any one else I know. I enclose your paper received to-day, with the two extracts verified by me crossed out as you desired. Many thanks for the passage from Marlowe (and for Coleridge's notes and the Langbaine extract sent before) and for your information. I will look over the proofs again at my leisure, and send you any corrections or conjectures I think worth while. I shall be curious to know how you thrive in the Bodleian, and if you find all of the poems you expected, though not the Parnassian extracts. I wish we could trace the two last.

Yours faithfully,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XCIV

To RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD

The Orchard,
Niton.
Aug. 31st, [1874].

DEAR SIR,

I have just received your very valuable present of the three dramatists. With your editions of Dekker and Heywood I was already in part acquainted; I hope now to complete the acquaintance. The Glapthorne is a very pretty book, and I mean to try the author's

metal at once. This morning also arrived the first detachment of the *Two Wise Men* whom I hope shortly to tackle. I write first of all to repeat my thanks for both remissions, and to ask one or two questions regarding Chapman, my Essay having made considerable progress since I had the pleasure of seeing you here. (1) P. 174 of the *Poems*, 2 lines from bottom of second column: Is the word "freres" rightly transcribed? and had it any known meaning? I possess a copy of the original edition of the *Epicede*, as also of the *Tears of Peace*, but they are at my chambers in London. I have carefully corrected the pointing of the former in this edition throughout, and suggested one or two marginal emendations of apparent misprints; I will send you this proof if you like, and you can put it into Mr. Chatto's hands, or if you please into the printer's. If too late to be made use of, I should like to have it back. (2) Can you tell me if the lines subjoined to the *Epicede* ("Thy tomb, arms, statue," etc.) belong to the same publication? or are these the "verses beneath the portraits of Prince Henry, in H. Holland's *Heroologia*, 1620, pp. 48–51"? I copy from the MS. list of contents to this volume which Mr. Chatto sent me with the first proofs: and I see no such verses elsewhere as those above described. I should be much obliged if you would send me a transcript of the famous passage on

poetry in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part I.*, Act 3 (I think), from the line, "If all the pens that ever poets held" to "Which into words no virtue can digest." I have occasion to quote it in the course of my Essay, and I cannot remember all the intervening lines. It occurs midway in the soliloquy beginning "Ah fair Zenocrate! divine Zenocrate!"[1]

Believe me, yours most sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

P.S.—I find that a leaf (pp. 267, 268) has slipped out of the second Vol. of Glapthorne, leaving your interesting notes on A. Gill and Lovelace both imperfect, one (p. 266) at the end, the other (p. 269) at the beginning. If you have the leaf missing by you, perhaps you will add to your kindness by sending it to complete the copy.

[1] The passage is in *The First Part of Tamburlaine the Great*, Act V., Sc. 2.

LETTER XCV

To Richard Herne Shepherd

The Orchard,
Niton.
Sept. 4th, [1874].

Dear Sir,

I should have acknowledged at once the receipt of the transcribed MSS. a few days since; but I put off writing for a day or two till I had time to study them with care before returning them, as I do by this post, with many thanks. At the first glance I recognized as old friends the two poems on *The Body* and *The Mind*, which, unless I am much mistaken, you will find in any edition of Ben Jonson's minor poems. That they are his and not Chapman's I presume there can be no manner of doubt. They are far too good in style, too simple and intelligible in idea, to be the work of Chapman, unless by some miracle. The absence of barbarism and bombast is conclusive against his authorship; and the metrical structure and turn of language are thoroughly Jonsonian. I have done my best to make sense of the "malicious trash," of which in spite of Gifford's unwillingness I fear we must believe Chapman guilty; but great part of it is evidently one chaotic mass

of corruption. Some readings, however (as "petards" and "Furens"), I have restored or substituted as evidently right; others I have suggested as plausible. It is such a disgusting piece of spiteful rubbish, and written in such an infernal jargon, that I am sorry for our old poet's credit it should ever have been taken down by some officious pickthank who probably waylaid the old man's weaker hours and perpetuated the memory of what in a healthier mood the author would have thrown into the fire.

I am delighted to hear of the recovery of *Eugenia*, and sincerely hope she may do more credit to her parentage than this ugliest of all metrical abortions. I have made a note of three questions which you will doubtless be able to solve for me. (1) I find in a paper on Marlowe in this month's *Cornhill* a statement which I think is not new to me, that Marlowe at his death left behind him, besides the two first sestiads of *Hero and Leander*, a fragment of 200 lines which was worked up by Chapman into the text of his sequel. There is strong internal evidence of this; can you tell me what external evidence there is of the fact, and when it was first stated in print? (2) What was Marlowe's exact age at his death, 30 or 33? (3) In the prefatory note of *The Second Maïden's Tragedy*, does the writer say that "*Thomas* Goughe" was substituted for "*William*" or vice versa in the

first alteration of names inscribed on the MS. ? I forgot to make a note of this. I shall be curious to hear in what condition you find the MS. of this play, and if it supplies any corrections of the text. I have given a careful account of its history and analysis of the probabilities of authorship in my Essay. There is a remarkable passage on the subject in Beddoes' *Correspondence*.

I am sorry that my delay in acknowledging the receipt of the MS. you were kind enough to send should have given you a moment's uneasiness ; the delay was undesigned, and I meant to have written as soon as I had deciphered the text, which proved a harder task than I expected. The original transcriber of the *Invective* did not, I suspect, himself understand more than half or a quarter of the execrable trash he was copying. The brutal allusions (among others) to the destruction of Jonson's papers by fire are curious ; so would other passages probably be, however worthless in themselves, if reducible to rhyme or reason, grammar or metre or sense.

Yours faithfully,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER XCVI

To Richard Herne Shepherd

The Orchard,
Niton.
Sept. 8th [1874].

Dear Sir,

If I had seen anywhere the newly unearthed copy of verses signed "G. C." without any such initials or other indication of authorship, I think I should have exclaimed "Aut Georgius Chapmannus aut Diabolus." I congratulate you once more, on this little windfall as an authentic curiosity. Many thanks for the other papers which I herewith return, having solved all my doubt by their help; and more for your very full and sufficient account of the origin of the report as to *Hero and Leander*. This day week (Tuesday, Sept. 15th) I return for a short time to London, where my address is 3, Great James Street, Bedford Row, W.C., so that we shall be at need within hail of each other for awhile.

Yours faithfully,
A. C. Swinburne.

P.S.—I quite agree with you that the unverified fragments (not, however, this last copy of commendatory verses—by the by what *is*

this *History of Hipolito and Isabella*? has it any connexion with the underplot of Middleton's *Women beware Women*, the names of hero and heroine being identical?) should be relegated to an Appendix as doubtful. I find on a second or third careful revision of the poem that (as I thought) Mr. Collier's reference of the fragment in *England's Parnassus* beginning "Their virtues mount like billows," etc., to *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* is wrong; there is no such passage in that production.—A. C. S.

LETTER XCVII

To Richard Herne Shepherd

Oct. 12th, [1874].

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged for the proofs of *Eugenia*. Do you want them back at once or may I keep them till the next come in? It is a curious and very characteristic poem, so far. Most of my MS. is now in Chatto's hands or I should have been happy to show you any part of it. I will tell him, if you like, to let you see the proofs when ready. I must add a note somewhere on *Eugenia*, which seems quite a long

affair. I [have] not been well enough to make or receive visits, besides being very busy, or should have hoped to see you last week.

Yours faithfully,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XCVIII

To RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD

3, *Great James St.*,
Bedford Row,
W.C.
Oct. 19th, [1874].

DEAR SIR,

In an Appendix of which I shall to-day place the MS. in the publisher's hands, I have seized an opportunity of doing such justice to the "energy and enthusiasm" displayed by you as editor of Chapman as must, I think, be taken to counterbalance any passing stricture on the state of the text which may occur in the body of my essay. As Chatto has not yet sent me the proofs I cannot recall the terms I may have used; but I am certain they can contain or imply no disparagement of your unmistakeable "goodwill," however I may have felt it necessary to remark on the extreme confusion of the

pointing which too generally prevails, to the infinite perplexity (as I know to my cost) of the reader: commas, periods, and semicolons being often shaken out over the page to light where they may in the middle of a sentence, which is then left to run on into the next without any note or stop to indicate where the sense breaks off or the sentence pauses. Such mispunctuation would make any author difficult to read; in the case of one who is already the most difficult and obscure writer I ever tried to tackle, it is an almost fatal impediment added to the many which Chapman had already cast in his reader's way. You will observe by the corrected proofs, which, as you wish to see them, I will send you through Mr. Chatto, that this reckless punctuation is the main and real ground of complaint. We expect it in the old editions, and must put up with it in a "facsimile" reprint, but in a modern edition we may reasonably expect to find it rectified. Assuredly I can have no wish to say or do anything that might possibly be hurtful to you with the publisher or the public; on the contrary, I have taken every occasion to express my gratitude for your help and my sense of your energy and goodwill as editor; nor should I have thought of taking upon myself unsolicited to read you a lecture on the imperfections of the text; but as you have thought my passing remark on the matter worth notice or appeal, I

must say that I find my opinion more than shared —considerably exceeded—by other students who have examined it. But if I have seemed to disparage or depreciate your "goodwill" as editor, that phrase I will certainly rescind or alter.

I finished reading *Eugenia* last night, and made a few corrections and suggestions, but the most important ("mouths" for the absurd reading "months" and "of" substituted for "called" as a supplementary word) I find you have made already. However, I will send these with the other proofs on the chance that they may be of use to you.

Yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER XCIX

To EDMUND GOSSE

3, Great James Street,
W.C.
October 30th, [1874].

MY DEAR GOSSE,

My time and mind have been for the last three days too entirely occupied with W. Rossetti's memoir and edition of Blake to think,

much less talk or write, on any other subject—let alone myself. Now having written to him twelve pages of thanks, and remarks on that and other matters, I write at once to tell you that, of course, if you like to write anything on me I shall be pleased and flattered, and all the more obliged if I am allowed to see it in English, as in Dr. Brandes' language it will be lost to me.[1] My birthday is April 5*th*—don't make it the 1*st*.

I think you are unjust to Chapman, and (in your article last Saturday on Minto's book,[2] which I have not yet seen) to the real and splendid though limited talents of Randolph—but of this we will talk when we next meet. Those damned proofs of *my* "Chapman" will drive me mad, or blind, or both—but while I retain my wits and eyes I shall remain ever

Affectionately yours,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] It appeared in *Det Nittende Aarhundrede*, a literary and political review, conducted in Danish, by Dr. Georg Brandes.

[2] *Characteristics of English Poets from Chaucer to Shirley*. By William Minto, 1874.

LETTER C

To Edmund Gosse

3, *Great James Street,*
W.C.
December 14th, [1874].

My dear Gosse,

I was very sorry when I saw your card that I could not come to you last Thursday. Horrible and hellish as the weather was, I would have tried to make my way thither if I had been able to go out at all. But next Thursday I hope we may meet at the [W.B.] Scotts, and on Saturday evening I intend to read my new poem to a few friends—beginning at 8 *sharp*. I shall be very glad if you can come; and I want to get Philip Marston, but I have mislaid his present address, and I don't know whom to ask to accompany him. I should like to ask O'Shaughnessy and Marzials if I knew *their* addresses, only I have eight guests engaged already, and too many in one room on such an occasion would make it more difficult to read; and for more than twelve I really have not house-room.

Send a line to say if you can come.

Yours ever,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CI

To John H. Ingram

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
December 31st, 1874.

My dear Mr. Ingram,

Many thanks for your first volume of Poe.[1] I had already glanced over your invaluable vindication, which I am happy to see is already bearing fruit ; and I congratulate you sincerely on the good work you have so well done for the memory of a great and maligned poet. My friend Edmund Gosse had an excellent article on it which I suppose you saw.

Believe me,
Yours very sincerely,
A. C. Swinburne.

[1] The first volume of the 4 Vol. collected edition of Poe's Works, published by Messrs. A. & C. Black, of Edinburgh. This collection was edited by Mr. Ingram, and contains his biographical vindication of the poet.

LETTER CII

To John H. Ingram

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 9th, 1875.

My dear Mr. Ingram,

Many thanks for the second and third volumes of your beautiful edition.[1] I sincerely hope that you will carry out, and that soon, your project of writing a full biography of Poe.

I agree with you entirely as to the less than little worth of ordinary reviews from whatever point of view; and I do not think I shall ever undertake a review of Poe, if only because Baudelaire has been before me, and made a study of the poet certainly unsurpassable and probably unapproachable for depth, subtlety, sympathy, and truth. I do not choose to go on any man's trail, and in writing a purely critical (not biographical) essay on Poe, one cannot now keep clear of ground preoccupied by the great French lyrist and critic. But I was nearly tempted the other day, on reading some imbecile remarks on the two men (giving, of course, the preference to the smaller), to write a rapid parallel or

[1] The 4 Vol. edition of Poe's Works, edited by Mr. Ingram.

contrast between Hawthorne—the half man of genius who never could carry out an idea or work it through to the full result—and Poe, the complete man of genius (however flawed and clouded at times) who always worked out his ideas thoroughly, and made something solid, rounded, and durable of them—not a mist-wreath or a waterfall. It is the difference between a poet and a quasi-poet. If you should ever find occasion or wish to quote this expression of my opinion, you are quite welcome to do so.[1]

I hope I shall have a sight of your letters to the American papers *in re* Poe *v.* Stoddard or others. As to the character of the Americans generally, my own impression (confirmed by experience) is that they are either delightful or detestable—the best or the worst company possible—there is no medium.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

A. C. Swinburne.

[1] It is understood that this opinion of Hawthorne was much modified by Swinburne in after years.

LETTER CIII

To Edmund Gosse

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 31st, [1875].

My dear Gosse,

I must confess that I had quite forgotten what anniversary[1] was yesterday, though oddly enough I had been thinking of it in passing, and (not having the date at hand to look up) had come to the conclusion that the centenary must have been over a year or two since. I am vexed to have let it slip. Had I known it a week earlier I should have proposed to you, and such friends as might have liked to join us, a meeting in honour of the day. If—as proposed in *The Athenæum*,—any commemoration of Lamb's centenary is to take place next week (Feb. 10th) I hope to take part in it, and come up to-morrow week for a few days only to London. There ought to be among our own friends and acquaintances enough lovers of Lamb to make at least a pleasant private party. Would Scott join it, do you think? I wrote to Watts

[1] Walter Savage Landor was born on the 30th of January, 1775; Charles Lamb on the 10th of February following.

about it yesterday. There being but ten days between the two dates, we might commemorate with the same libations both the two great men who loved and admired each other in life, and whose memories might fitly and gracefully be mingled after death in our affectionate recollection.

I read your article of yesterday with great pleasure, and with thorough sympathy of opinion, except as to one expression which startled me considerably. You speak of the "laborious versification" of Catullus, whom I should have called the least laborious, and the most spontaneous in his godlike and birdlike melody, of all lyrists known to me except Sappho and Shelley: I should as soon call a lark's note laboured as his. And with all my loving admiration of Landor as a poet, I cannot consider him as belonging to the same class, or even to the same kind, as Catullus; though you have very justly pointed out the many and noble personal qualities they had in common. Landor's verse, as a rule, without ever being harsh or weak, yet wants the contrary characteristic of subtle and simple sweetness; while no poet ever had more of this than the Veronese: few ever had so much. This has been noted by Landor himself, who, (perhaps under the influence of Catullus,) has sometimes touched in his Latin verse a string of more exquisite and spontaneous melody than

was often struck in his English poems. As to the wholly unequalled if not unapproached and unapproachable excellence of his prose, you know how thoroughly I am at one with you. Indeed, it is always a thorn in my flesh when writing prose, and a check to any satisfaction I might feel in it, to reflect that probably I never have written or shall write a page that Landor might have signed. Nothing of the sort (or of any sort) ever troubles me in writing verse, but this always haunts me when at work on prose. As to my own intercourse with the divine old man, I shall never have more to tell the world than I have already made public in verse ; for there is nothing to tell except such things as cannot be told ; slight personal matters, not the less precious that they must be private.

My article in *The Fortnightly* is, of course, that on Wells, recast from the thirteen or fourteen year old sketch written when I was hardly quit of college. Anyhow I can write better prose than I could at twenty-one or so. I am curious to read the first review of my book on Chapman. There are some passages which I rather hope may attract notice of one kind or another ; *e.g.* (1) the excursus on Browning, which I do think the truest criticism, and most to the point, that has appeared on the subject, though I don't expect it to convert those (for such I know there are !) who prefer his earlier works (*i.e.* those

which he was pleased to consider dramatic or lyrical) to those later studies on which his genuine and peculiar fame depends. (2) The summary of evidence (internal and external) as to the authorship of the *Second Maiden's Tragedy*, which I consider rather a good bit of exhaustive criticism on a debateable subject. (3) Certain passages of a somewhat Landorian nature (when the old lion was using his teeth and claws), or, so I flatter myself, at pp. 54, 55, and 71. (4) The lash applied to stage licensers and the English censorial system on pp. 97, 98. (5) The critical and historical review of the tragedies based on contemporary French annals. (6) The final "discourse" on the nature and the end of our art, and on the two kinds of poets—the Shakespeares and Marlowes who stand on the right among the gods, the Jonsons and Chapmans who stand on the left among the giants; a distinction which I mean some day to examine and work out at greater length. These, if any, are points in the book which I think deserve some attention.

I am now at work on my long-designed essay or study on the metrical progress or development of Shakespeare as traceable by ear and *not* by finger, and the general changes of tone and stages of mind expressed or involved in this change or progress of style. I need hardly say that I begin with a massacre of the pedants worthy of

celebration, an Icelandic saga—"a murder grim and great." I leave the "finger-counters and finger-casters" without a finger to count on or an (ass's) ear to wag. Which do you think would be the best title for this essay—*The Three Stages of Shakespeare*, or *The Progress of Shakespeare?* If not (as I fear it is) too pretentious, the latter would perhaps be—or sound—best.

Also, if you can, do for my sake help me to a comprehensive title for my forthcoming collection of reprinted verse, which comprises the *Song of Italy*, *Ode on the French Republic*, and the *Diræ* (sonnets mostly printed in *The Examiner*, of '73). "*Political Poems*," which Chatto has put on the (proof) title-page, would probably sink any book at once. I want some title which may express the mixture in the volume of blessing and cursing—two-thirds of the first to one-third of the second. Under this main title I should put the separate sub-titles of the three parts, so as to avoid all appearance of the Grub Street jockeyship of passing off old wares under a new name. The last name I have thought of is *Songs in time of Change*—but I don't much like it—or *Poems of Revolution!*

I have written you a long and egoistic letter, but, as you say, it is long since we had a talk, and I have been thinking repeatedly of writing to you lately about these and other matters—notably about Blake and Poe—which there is

no room to do here or now. My volume of *Essays and Studies* is going rapidly through the press. I have added a preface and sundry notes to the original text, which is otherwise almost unaltered in any way.

Yours affectionately,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CIV

To EDMUND GOSSE

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
February 5th, [1875].

MY DEAR GOSSE,

I mean to come up to London on Monday morning (*8th*) and hope to see you at once and arrange our little affair for Wednesday. Could we lunch or dine anywhere together on Monday and talk it over? A line dropt at my rooms that morning would be sure to catch me on arriving, and we could meet when and where you pleased.

I have at last hit on a passable name for my unchristened and unchristian offspring—*Songs of*

Two Nations. All the poems in the book, great and small, deal with French or Italian matters—Republican, Papal, or Imperial. I shall be delighted if you *do* review "Chapman," and certainly none the less if you find debateable points which we may discuss in private or in public—it gives a zest to the expression of sympathy to have some points of amicable disagreement. Apropos, would Minto not like to partake of our Passover feast in honour of a Lamb quite other than Paschal (as Carlyle might word it)? I should be delighted to meet him there — or anywhere.

Yours affectionately
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CV

To Thomas Purnell

3 Great James Street.
February 20th, 1875.

My dear Purnell,

For the sake of Heaven, of History, and of Truth, let me see or hear from you as soon as possible. The return of Dr. Kenealy for Stoke has at last given me courage to make public as much as I dare of the case of that

Royal Claimant yesterday mentioned in the *Daily News*. I have *every* reason to believe that the injured lady *still lives* — that the rightful Queen of England is at this moment a prisoner in Newgate. Here is a case for the truly honourable member for Stoke. What was the Tichborne case to this? Why, the man that should right her might aspire to share her throne. I have spent hours, *really*, in writing a letter on the subject (suppressing the secret of her existence which I now confide as yet to your ear alone) which under the signature of Historicus I must and will get published and you must and shall help me. The *Daily News* would be best, as they first have dared (most honourably) to mention it in public—but a slight verbal alteration would fit it for any paper. The case must stir the heart alike of Whig and Tory. I trust this address will chance to catch you to-night—I know no likelier.

Ever yours,
A. C. S.

LETTER CVI

To Edmund Clarence Stedman

[*Holmwood,*
Henley-on-Thames.]
February 20th, 1875.

My dear Mr. Stedman,

I have just received your letter and the kindly and able article accompanying it. First of all, accept my cordial thanks for both, and my assurance that I consider the latter the most powerful as well as the most gratifying to me personally I ever read on the subject. Then I must say how glad I am that you have done me the justice not to attribute my long neglect in writing to graceless and discourteous ingratitude. The enforced delay began through inability to write at the time with the proper fulness, being frequently too unwell to apply my hand or mind to writing, and constantly distracted by various calls on my time and attention. Then, leaving London for change of air, I put by as far and as long as possible all correspondence of business or of pleasure. These together do, I hope, make up a real and sufficient excuse to any one who will take into friendly account the general human experience how a duty put off for a day by necessity is sure to be put off by accident for months.

Then, very unluckily for me, the mere physical act of writing, which to some men, *e.g.* to Rossetti, seems a positive enjoyment, is to me usually a positive and often a painful effort. I have often wished to have lived my life and sung my song in the times of unwritten and purely oral poetry. But I must resign myself to the curse of penmanship — and mine, I fear, is a curse to my friends also. How Shakespeare must have hated it ! Look at his villainous and laborious pothooks, and Ben Jonson's, or Milton's, copperplate and vigorous perfection of hand.

Now let me at last tell you how truly and how much I have enjoyed the beautiful book of poems which you must long since have thought of as thrown away on the most thankless and ungracious of recipients. Your rebuke on the subject of American poetry is doubtless as well deserved as it is kindly and gently expressed. Yet I must say that while I appreciate (I hope) the respective excellence of Mr. Bryant's *Thanatopsis* and of Mr. Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*, I cannot say that either of them leaves in my ear the echo of a single note of song. It is excellent good speech, but if given us as song its first and last duty is to sing. The one is most august meditation, the other a noble expression of deep and grave patriotic feeling on a supreme national occasion ; but the thing more necessary, though it may be less noble than these, is the pulse, the

fire, the passion of music—the quality of a singer, not of a solitary philosopher or a patriotic orator. Now, when Whitman is not speaking bad prose he sings, and when he sings at all he sings well. Mr. Longfellow has a pretty little pipe of his own, but surely it is very thin and reedy. Again, whatever may be Mr. Emerson's merits, to talk of his poetry seems to me like talking of the scholarship of a child who has not learnt its letters. Even Browning's verse always goes to a recognisable tune (I say not to a good one), but in the name of all bagpipes what is the tune of Emerson's? Now it is a poor thing to have nothing but melody and be unable to rise above it into harmony, but one or the other, the less if not the greater, you *must* have. Imagine a man full of great thoughts and emotions and resolved to express them in painting who has absolutely no power upon either form or colour. Wainwright the murderer, who never had any thought or emotion above those of a pig or of a butcher, will be a better man for us than he. But (as Blake says) "Enough! or too much."

I have no love of talking of my own or other men's personal or family matters, uninvited, but there can hardly be egotism or self-conceit in complying with the direct request of a friend (as I understood you to ask for some account of my "birth and career"—I think you said in your last); so for once I will begin to prate (as Byron

loved and I do not love to do—though now my letter [or essay !] is finished I fear it must look as if I did—and very much) of my parentage and personality. The application of a stranger like the editor of the *Men of the Time* I long ago civilly declined to entertain, conceiving that the public had no concern but with my published works, and leaving him to find out what he could or to invent what he pleased ; with the happy result, that in his first two lines I found myself, to my great delight, born some years out of my time at a place which I never heard of till I was between 20 and 30.

My father, Admiral Swinburne, is the second son of Sir John Swinburne, a person whose life would be better worth writing than mine. Born and brought up in France, his father (I believe) a naturalised Frenchman (we were all Catholic and Jacobite rebels and exiles) and his mother a lady of the house of Polignac (a quaint political relationship for me, as you will admit), my grandfather never left France till called away at 25 on the falling in of such English estates (about half the original quantity) as confiscation had left to a family which in every Catholic rebellion from the days of my own Queen Mary to those of Charles Edward had given their blood like water and their lands like dust for the Stuarts. I assume that his Catholicism sat lightly upon a young man who in the age of

Voltaire had enjoyed the personal friendship of Mirabeau ; anyhow he had the sense to throw it to the dogs and enter the political life from which in those days it would have excluded him. He was (of course on the ultra-Liberal side) one of the most extreme politicians as well as one of the hardest riders and the best art patrons of his time. Take these instances : (1) He used to tell us that he and Lord Grey had by the law of the land repeatedly made themselves liable to be impeached and executed for high treason, and certainly I have read a speech of his on the Prince of Wales, which, if delivered with reference to the present bearer of that title, would considerably astonish the existing House of Commons. (2) It was said that the two maddest things in the north country were his horse and himself ; but I don't think the horse can have been the madder, or at least the harder to kill ; for once when out shooting he happened to blow away his right eye with a good bit of the skull, but was trepanned and lived to see his children's children (and a good many of them), and after more than ninety-eight years of health and strength to die quietly of a week's illness. We all naturally hoped to see him fill up his century, but the Fate said no. (3) He was the friend of the great Turner, of Mulready, and of many lesser artists; I wish to God he had discovered Blake, but that no man did till our own

day—for the rest, he was most kind and affectionate to me always as child, boy and youth. To the last he was far liker in appearance and manners to an old French nobleman (I have heard my mother remark it) than to any type of the average English gentleman.

He said that Mirabeau as far excelled as a companion and a talker one other man as that other man did all men else he had ever known in his life, of any kind or station ; the man thus distancing all the world beside and distanced as immeasurably by Mirabeau alone, was Wilkes. This I always remembered with interest, and I thought it would interest you ; considering how many famous and splendid persons an able and active public man must have seen and known, who all but completes his century, and whose clearness and activity of mind never fails him to his last hour. An ancestress of his (*i.e.* a Lady Swinburne) bore 30 children to one husband, people thronged about her carriage in the streets to see the living and thriving mother of thirty sons and daughters. I think you will allow that when this race chose at last to produce a poet, it would have been at least remarkable if he had been content to write nothing but hymns and idyls for clergymen and young ladies to read out in chapels and drawing rooms.

My mother is daughter of (the late) Earl of Ashburnham, whose family, though one of them

was the closest follower of Charles I. to his death, afterwards held sensibly aloof from the cause of the later Stuarts, and increased in wealth and titles (there *was* a Swinburne peerage, but it has been dormant or forfeit since the 13th or 14th century).

So much for family history ; which may be a stupid matter, but to write about my personality is to me yet more so. My life has been eventless and monotonous ; like other boys of my class, I was five years at school at Eton, four years at college at Oxford ; I never cared for any pursuit, sport, or study as a youngster, except poetry, riding, and swimming ; and, though as a boy my verses were bad enough, I believe I may say I was far from bad at the two latter. Also, being bred by the sea, I was a good cragsman, and am vain to this day of having scaled a well-known cliff on the South Coast ; ever before and ever since reputed to be inaccessible. Perhaps I may be forgiven for referring to such puerilities having read (in cuttings from more than one American journal) bitterly contemptuous remarks on my physical debility and puny proportions. I am much afraid this looks like an echo of poor great Byron's notorious and very natural soreness about his personal defect ; but, really, if I were actually of powerless or deformed body I am certain I should not care though all men (and women) on earth knew and remarked on it. I write all this

rubbish because I really don't know what to tell you about myself, and having begun to egotise I go on in pure stupidity. I suppose you do not require a Rousseau-like record of my experiences in spiritual or material emotions; and knowing as you do the dates and sequence of my published books you know every event of my life. (*Note.* The order of composition is not always that of publication. *Atalanta* was begun the very day after I had given the last touch to *Chastelard.*)

February 21st.

Here I left off last night, being very tired and feeling myself getting stupid. I see I have already done much more than answer such of your questions as I could; and as you have induced me for the very first time in my life to write about myself, I am tempted, considering that I have probably been more be-written and belied than any man since Byron, to pour myself out to a sincere (distant) friend a little more, telling any small thing that may come into my head to mention.

I have heard that Goethe, Victor Hugo, and myself were all born in the same condition—all but dead, and certainly not expected to live an hour. Yet I grew up a healthy boy enough and fond of the open air, though slightly built, and have never had a serious touch of illness in my life. As for the sea, its salt *must* have been

in my blood before I was born. I can remember no earlier enjoyment than being held up naked in my father's arms and brandished between his hands, then shot like a stone from a sling through the air, shouting and laughing with delight, head foremost into the coming wave—which could only have been the pleasure of a very little fellow. I remember being afraid of other things, but never of the sea. But this is enough of infancy; only it shows the *truth* of my endless passionate returns to the sea in all my verse.

To make a long leap—for to be egoistic one must be desultory, and jump from little-boy-hood into young-manhood—I was about to tell you last night that I had once an opening into that public life which alone (I think) authorises public curiosity into the details of a man's biography. Several years ago the Reform League (a body of extreme reformers not now extant, I believe, but of some note and power for a time) solicited me to sit in Parliament (offering to insure my seat and pay all expenses) as representative of more advanced democratic or republican opinions than were represented there. Now I never in my life felt any ambition for any work or fame but a poet's (except, indeed, while yet a boy, for a soldier's, but my father resolutely stamped that out), and I appealed to the man I most loved and revered on earth

(Mazzini being then luckily in London) to know if he thought it was my duty to forego my own likings on the chance of being of truer use to the cause, and Mazzini told me I need not—I was doing my natural kind of service as it was, and in Parliament I should of course be wasting my time and strength for a year on the chance of being of service by one speech or vote on some great and remote occasion. I never was more relieved in my life than when I felt I could dismiss the application with a wholly clear conscience. (I have seen a report of this in print, but not quite accurate.)

As my Antitheism has been so much babbled about, perhaps I may here say what I really do think on religious matters. Having been as child and boy brought up a *quasi*-Catholic, of course I went in for that as passionately as for other things (*e.g.* well-nigh to unaffected and unshamed ecstasies of adoration when receiving the Sacrament), then when this was naturally stark dead and buried, it left nothing to me but a turbid Nihilism ; for a Theist I never was ; I always felt by instinct and perceived by reason that no man could conceive of a *personal* God except by crude superstition or else by true supernatural revelation ; that a natural God was the absurdest of all human figments ; because no man could by other than apocalyptic means—*i.e.* by other means than a violation of the laws

and order of nature—*conceive* of any other sort of Divine person than man with a difference—man with some qualities intensified and some qualities suppressed—man with the good in him exaggerated and the evil excised. This, I say, I have always seen and avowed since my mind was ripe enough to think freely. Now, of course, this is the exact definition of every god that has ever been worshipped under any revelation. Men give Him the qualities they prefer in themselves or about them—*e.g.* the God of the Christians is good for domestic virtue, bad for patriotic. A consistently good Christian cannot, or certainly need not, love his country. Again, the god of the Greeks and Romans is not good for the domestic (or *personal* in the Christian sense) virtues, but gloriously good for the patriotic. But we who worship no material incarnation of any qualities, no person may worship the Divine humanity, the ideal of human perfection and aspiration, without worshipping any god, any person, any fetish at all. Therefore I might call myself, if I wished, a kind of Christian[1] (of the Church of Blake and Shelley), but assuredly in no sense a Theist. Perhaps you will think this is only

[1] That is, taking the semi-legendary Christ as type of human aspiration and perfection and supposing (if you like) that Jesus may have been the highest and purest sample of man on record.—[A. C. S.]

clarified Nihilism, but at least it is no longer turbid. There is something of this, with much other matter, in Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*—a book from which I cannot say that I learnt anything, since it left me much as it found me, not far from the point to which he tries to bring his reader ; so that I was more than once struck by coming on phrases and definitions about "God" almost verbally coincident with those such as I had myself used, though not in public print, years before his book appeared. But it is a *very* good and fine book, and has done, I believe, great good already, especially, of course, among the younger sort. (Has it found any echo in America ?) I think and hope that among the younger Englishmen who think at all just now that Theism is tottering ; Theism, which I feel to be sillier (if less dangerous) even than theology.

To return to personality (by no means a Divine one), I need not say that you are most welcome to show any part or all of this huge epistle to any one you please, but if you wish to make use of any *facts* in it in a public way, please do *so in the third person*, as I really have told you more than you could have learnt from any intimate old friend of my family or myself, and I should loathe to appear in print talking either about myself or it, and I am sure you would do nothing to pain or to make me feel

or look absurd, in revenge for the long babble you have brought on yourself, which, after all, you need never read unless you like. Wishing to make up for my long and unseemly silence, I have now probably erred on the other side.

You will soon see the *Poems and Ballads* in a new edition, and all those written at college removed into the same volume with my two early plays and labelled all together as *Early Poems*. Your guess at some among them is quite right, but of course there are more. It was good of you to find anything in that first book praiseworthy and notable; I had forgotten the verses you quote from it, and rather liked them. Of all I have done I rate *Hertha* highest as a single piece, finding in it the most of lyric force and music combined with the most of condensed and clarified thought. I think there really is a good deal compressed and concentrated into that poem.

I shall send you when ready two volumes of reprinted and now first collected prose and verse respectively, with something new in each, together with my essay on old Chapman, in which I hope you will like the panegyric on Marlowe, introducing the final passage on the two kinds of great poets. I am now writing in the form of an essay a sort of history of the style of Shakespeare and its progress through various stages of growth. This I hope to do well, as

I have been studying Shakespeare ever since I was six years old.

When I tell you that I never was in France or Italy for more than a few weeks together, and that not more than three or four times in my life, and never was out of England at all till I was eighteen, I think I shall have told you about all you want to know, and answered your questions about as well as I can. There is a misprint, I feel sure, in the words of mine you cite, in your article (p. 592) thanks to my damnable autograph—I must have talked of "taking delight in the metrical forms," not poems," which is meaningless, or nearly so, "of any language," etc. I should think Mr. Conway (whom I know slightly) would be an excellent man to edit your book in London. Possibly you might be able to give me some hint as to his dealings of my own with American publishers. When *Atalanta* appeared in 1865, I received (I think, from Messrs. Osgood, but am not sure) a cheque for £20 with a courteous note proposing arrangements for any future books. My political poems brought in a very little, and *Bothwell* it seems nobody would take at any price. Pardon my intruding on you these financial matters, but Mr. Longfellow, whom I once met in London, asked me what I had received from America, and on hearing told me I had been robbed of a sum which

sounded to me incredible (it was much more than I ever had at once in my life—though that is not saying much) ; so, perhaps, you may be able to do me a kindness in the matter.

I did mean to tell you about my present poetical projects, but being by this time as weary of the subject of myself as you must be I will give you instead the name of one more friend. All my friends know and joke about my lifelong fondness (I am happy to say I have always found it naturally reciprocated) for very little children and very old persons. Of the latter I had known already two sublime examples in my grandfather and Mr. Landor, and last summer I made and enjoyed the acquaintance of Mr. Trelawny (the friend of Shelley, of Byron, and of Greece) ; a triad of Titans, of whom one was a giant of genius. The present piratical old hero calls me the last of the poets, who he thought all died with Byron. To hear him speak of Shelley is most beautiful and touching ; at that name his voice (usually that of an old sea-king, as he is) *always* changes and softens unconsciously. "There," he said to me, "was the very best of men, and he was treated as the very worst." He professes fierce general misanthropy, but is as ardent a republican (and atheist) as Shelley was at twenty ; a magnificent old Viking to look at. Of the three Landor must have been less handsome and noble-looking

in youth than in age; my grandfather and Trelawny probably even more. At last I have done. If you ever get thus far, please let me know that this has reached you safely.

Ever yours faithfully,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CVII

To Lord Morley

3 Great James Street.
Mar. 5th, [1875].

MY DEAR MORLEY,

Many thanks for your note which ought to have been acknowledged by return of post.

I can't say to what proportions my *étude* on Shakespeare may dilate, but I fancy to that of 3 or 4 consecutive instalments in the form of articles.[1] (I hope by the by your Diderot progresses, I read the too-short first article with great interest.) I am still engaged on the period where the influence of rhyme and the influence of Marlowe were fighting—or throwing dice—for the (dramatic) soul of Shakespeare. No one

[1] *A Study of Shakespeare* did not appear complete in volume form until 1880.

I believe has yet noted how long and hard the fight or the game was.

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CVIII

To Lord Morley

3, *Great James St.*
March 9th, [1875].

My dear Morley,

Would you like to have my *Vision of Spring in Winter*[1] (which came too late once before) in the next number? I think myself April and not autumn or winter would be the time of the year for its birth—especially as it begins and ends with a reference to the "birth-month."

I am well on with the first division of my essay on Shakespeare. Having touched on Romeo and the two Richards as his first attempts in tragedy (apart from the recasts of other men's work) I am now discussing the early comedies written mainly or partly in rhyme. This discussion and a short digression on the "rifacimenti" will bring me to an end of the

[1] Printed in *The Fortnightly Review* for April, 1875. Reprinted in *Poems and Ballads, Second Series*, 1878, pp. 135–140.

first epoch, which I hope to finish this month—but not in time for April. Do you think *The Progress of Shakespeare* a permissible title—not too presumptuous in sound? I had called my essay *The Three Stages of Shakespeare*—but neither I nor any one else liked that title.[1]

I have just had a letter of acknowledgment from the venerable author of *Joseph*,[2] written in an almost crazy style of "chaff." He says the book found favour in its day, but he always thought and still thinks nothing of it; complimentary to my judgment, certainly, and that of its few other friends. But as he goes on to say he is carefully revising it, and is evidently excited by the hope of its republication, I suspect this merely a vulpine view of the grapes of popular success.

Ever yours sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] *The Three Stages of Shakespeare*, printed in *The Fortnightly Review* for May, 1875, and January, 1876.

[2] Charles Jeremiah Wells, author of *Joseph and his Brethren*, published in 1824, and reissued, under Swinburne's auspices, in 1876.

LETTER CIX

To John Churton Collins

3, *Great James Street.*
March 9th, [1875].

My dear Mr. Collins,

(*puisque Monsieur y a*) I don't see why you should *Mr.* me unless you esteem my friendship less than I do yours. *Basta.* I shall be in town till after Easter; the fortnight following that holy anniversary I shall spend in the country—so I hope to see you before. I am, of course, much interested and delighted to hear of your discoveries, but it is disappointing to find there is no comedy of St. Cyril's forthcoming after all. I really did want to hear what V. Hugo (speaking of Aeschylus) calls "le rire de ce génie farouche," tho' I must say I should as soon have expected a comedy from his patron saint, the murderer of Hypatia.

I am hard at work on my history of the metrical progress of Shakespeare; you are one of the few whom I really want to like it, and I look forward to showing you the MS. as far as it has gone. I am still in the first or rhyming period, but have, I think, thrown some new light, or at least made some new remarks, on the influences which affected that stage of his work.

Did you read my article on Wells' *Joseph* in the Feby. *Fortnightly?* I have just had the oddest and most "cracked" letter from the author that ever was written by a man of genius. Hoping to see you soon.

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CX

To Lord Morley

3 *Great James Street.*

Mar. 12th, [1875].

My dear Morley,

Many thanks for the cheque just received and very acceptable as a sop to Cerberus in the form of duns—would God that Cerberus had but three heads! I have sent the poem[1] to Virtue & Co., but have just remembered (too late) that the MS. was without address or signature. I presume they must know my hand and my address, however, by this time, and that I shall have received and returned the proof before the Christian world is again singing hallelujahs over "the sacrifice of God to God's own wrath," as

[1] *A Vision of Spring in Winter*, which first appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* in April 1875, and was afterwards included in *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series, 1878.

Shelley defines the means of the redemption of mankind in a suppressed verse of the cancelled edition of *Laon and Cythna*, of which I have a copy by me—or must the printers be told by letter where to send the proof and MS. ?

I hope to be able to send you a fair instalment of the "Shakespeare" in good time for May. I have put aside for a day or two my direct work on the plays of the first period to grapple with Mr. Spedding's theory of the authorship of *Henry VIII.* It is as fine and subtle a piece of criticism as it ought to be, coming from the "champion editor" of *Bacon*, but I demur to the conclusion—inevitable if you accept any part of his premises—that Fletcher was the author of the death-scene of Katherine. Being fresh from a first examination of his essay, I turned aside to analyse it (to answer it as far as I can) at once. If you have read his essay, what do you think of the case he has made out ? As you like it best I think I shall stick to my old title of "Three Stages"—I don't quite like "growth."

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXI

To Edmund Gosse

3, *Great James Street,*
W.C.
March 13th, [1875].

My dear Gosse,

I am always glad to see you, and shall be on Wednesday. I am engaged that day among the Philistines to "lunch" and all that follows, but shall be disengaged—though probably imbecile—by 8 p.m. I was going to write to you this morning—it is now 11½ p.m.—to tell you that I had yesterday an interview with Chatto, and of course mooted the question of the transference of your poems—in such fashion as, if our ages were reversed, I should have liked you to do for me—saying "I had reason to believe" you would not be sorry to withdraw your book from King's hands, and transfer it to his—whereon (as Meinhold would say) *Ille*—"Oh, yes—he would be happy to take your book from Mr. King." Of course I told him—what was the simple truth—how well I thought of your work, and that it would be a distinction to him to become your publisher—but there was no need of that, as far as I could see. Of course, you and he must arrange about terms; even if I had known anything about your views

in that matter, I could not have arranged with him for you ; and I strongly advise you to consult Watts thereupon—but as far as my own experience goes, I must say I don't think you will find Chatto a bad sort of man to deal with. But of my own or my friends' finances I never professed to be a judge (God—or something better—help my friends if I did!) and as to your position as a poet, I told Chatto yesterday —what I thought, and need not repeat. But one thing I have made certain—the minute you wish to pass from King to Chatto you can—and will be welcome.[1]

Yours affectionately,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CXII

To William Smith Williams[2]

3, *Great James St.*,
London.
March 15th, 1875.

My dear Sir,

I ought to have thanked you before now for the letter which you forwarded to me

[1] The second edition of Mr. Gosse's *On Viol and Flute* was accordingly transferred to Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

[2] Mr. Williams was the brother-in-law of Wells, and reader to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., for whom he discovered and secured Charlotte Brontë.

from Mr. Wells, to whom I must also write a word of acknowledgment, and also for the very kind expressions of your note accompanying it. I am sincerely glad if I have been able to do any little service to the fame of a noble poem which I have admired for many years, and which I am happy to hear is at last about to have a fresh start with the public. I consider it a great honour to be in any way associated with its revival, and as it were to act as outrider or usher to what I hope will prove the triumphal car of a poet too long defrauded of his just crown of praise.

I remain, My dear Sir,
Yours very sincerely,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CXIII

To Charles Jeremiah Wells

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
June 22nd, 1875.

My dear Mr. Wells,

It is rather late in the day to answer a letter dated 5 March, but I hope you will believe that it was from no intentional negligence

that I have so long delayed the expression of my thanks for your kind and friendly recognition of my slight services. The fact is that I hoped and intended to be out of the fog and filth of London three months since, and then to write to you, our veteran poet, out of the midst of spring sights and sounds, from a quiet country house. But first publisher's business, engagements thick and threefold, and then ill-health, tied me fast till the middle of this month ; but as soon as I am able to write, being safe here among woods and gardens, I do write to say how glad I was to get your letter, and to think (in spite of your assumed depreciation of your own glorious work) that my modest tribute may have given you some little satisfaction. I can honestly assure you that I am but one of many who wait impatiently for the pleasure of seeing your great poem reissued, and holding in their hands, not the fragments I have chipped off to exhibit as specimens, but the "one entire and perfect chrysolite." And surely, however much you may despise fame, it is something to be able to give to others the noblest of all kinds of pleasure.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

[The following communication from Wells is endorsed upon the back of Swinburne's letter.]

My dear Williams,

I have no time to write. After thanks equal to the pains you have taken, I have nothing to add that you will not be able to gather from my letter to Swinburne, which you will be good enough to post to his *sure* address, as that on his letter seems rather vague—at least to me (after having read it, of course).

I shall send the MSS. by post, as they say it is sure, as *papier d'affaires*. It would be a *coup mortel* if it miscarried, for I have had no time to recopy the heavy additions I have made. Send me a newspaper in acknowledgment *as soon* as you receive it. It will leave here Sunday the 11th.

Yours affect'ly,

Charley.

LETTER CXIV

To Edmund Gosse

Holmwood, Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
June 30th, 1875.

My dear Gosse,

Thanks for your note and its enclosure. I think I must ask you to forward the book (or

let Chatto do so), as I can't answer M. Mallarmé until I have seen it, and his letter ought to be answered at once, and I don't know when I shall return to town.

I was naturally delighted with your equally able and friendly article on my essays. Very likely I have said some extravagant things about Rossetti, but, as a translator, I do still deliberately regard him as unparalleled. Shelley is, no doubt, fully as beautiful a workman in that line, but as inaccurate as R. is accurate.

Ever yours truly,

A. C. Swinburne.

I am writing in bed, being laid up with a lame foot which I sprained very badly four days since, and have been (and am still) unable all this time to put it to the ground without awful pain—so excuse pothooks.—A. C. S.

LETTER CXV

To Stéphane Mallarmé

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames,
Mercredi, 7 Juillet, 1875.

Monsieur et cher confrère (permettez que je vous adresse de cette façon mes remerciements).

Je viens de recevoir à l'instant le livre magnifique[1] que, vous et M. Manet, vous avez bien voulu m'envoyer par les mains de M. Bonaparte-Wyse, qui l'a remis à un jeune poëte de mes amis, M. Edmund Gosse ; celui-ci de son côté s'est chargé de me le transmettre de Londres en province, et je viens de parcourir avec le plus vif intérêt ces pages merveilleuses où le premier poëte américain se trouve deux fois si parfaitement traduit, grâce à la collaboration de deux grands artistes. Il y a maintenant douze ans—c'était au printemps de 1863—que je fus conduit chez M. Manet par mes amis MM. Whistler et Fantin ; lui sans doute ne s'en souvient pas, mais moi, alors très jeune et tout à fait inconnu (sinon à quelques amis intimes) comme poëte ou du moins comme aspirant à ce nom, vous croyez

[1] *Les Poëmes d'Edgar Poe*, illustré de 5 dessins de Manet texte anglais et français. Paris : Librairie de l'eau forte, 1874.

bien que ce fut pour moi un souvenir qui ne s'envolerait pas facilement. Je suis heureux de voir l'annonce de la traduction complète des poésies de Poe que vous devez accompagner d'une préface de votre main. Vous avez peut-être déjà vu l'excellent travail de M. John Ingram, un des plus fidèles admirateurs d'Edgar Poe, qui vient enfin de réduire en poudre tout le tas de mensonges et de calomnies forgées ou rassemblées par cet infâme Griswold,[1]

"Dont le nom n'est plus qu'un vomitif."

Il n'a pas laissé debout une seule des charges portées contre le poëte mort par ce révérend coquin que Baudelaire avait si bien qualifié de "pédagogue-vampire."

Veuillez agréer, vous et M. Manet, l'expression de ma reconnaissance et de mon admiration.

ALGERNON CH. SWINBURNE.

[1] In 1850, a minor writer of America, Rufus W. Griswold, who had a personal spite against Poe, published a *Memoir of Edgar Poe*, which was full of malignity and untruth. His malicious misrepresentations were not exposed for many years.

LETTER CXVI

To Joseph Knight

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
July 8th, [1875.]

My dear Knight,

Not having any stray song on hand I have just sat down and thrown off the enclosed. I pique myself on its moral tone; in an age when all other lyrists, from Tennyson to Rossetti, go in (metrically) for constancy and eternity of attachment and reunion in future lives, etc., etc., etc., I limit love, honestly and candidly, to 24 hours; and quite enough too in all conscience.

When I last took the trouble to write a song for present use (it was for Hollingshed's revival of "The Merry Wives of Windsor"[1]) I priced it by advice of Sandys, who acted as common friend on the occasion, at £50; I don't expect to sell my songs usually at that rate, not being (thank Phœbus) a Laureate; but of course you know I can't *afford* to give my name and my verses for nothing.

[1] *Love laid his sleepless head*, printed in *The Examiner*, Dec. 26, 1874. Reprinted in *Poems and Ballads, Second Series*, 1878, pp. 133, 134. The lines were sung by Miss Furtado at a revival of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* produced at the Gaiety Theatre, London, Dec. 19, 1874.

I should like of all things to meet Sir C. Dilke, and especially under your auspices; there are few men whose acquaintance I should be so glad to make. But I don't know when I shall be in London again. At present I am a close prisoner with a badly sprained foot, and have to work against tides to get my biographical and critical article on Beaumont and Fletcher for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* ready in time.

Yours ever,

A. C. Swinburne.

[I had sooner print the letter than the poem! It's a charming bit, tho'.—*Note by Sir C. Dilke.*]

LETTER CXVII

To William Smith Williams

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
July 17th, 1875.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your note enclosing another from Mr. Wells, to whom I shall be much obliged if you will convey my thanks and acknowledgment.

I shall count it as great an honour as it will

be a pleasure to me if any use is to be made of my article in *The Fortnightly Review* on his great poem, or my name to be in any way connected with its reissue. The article as it stands would of course not do for an Introduction or Preface to the book from which it gives such copious extracts; but if these were simply omitted, and references substituted to each passage as it appeared in the new edition, I think all purposes would be served, and the discrepancy mentioned by Mr. Wells between at least one passage as cited by me from the text of the manuscript since lost, and the same passage as now rewritten, would be obviated by the disappearance of the quotation from my text.

I wish the Introduction were worthier of the poem introduced; but having carefully revised and corrected it both by excision and amplification before its appearance in print—for in its original state it was written long ago, I think about the year I left college, and being doubtless juvenile enough in style, needed some recasting throughout—I think it is now as good as I could make it without further expansion; and certainly it is quite long enough for the prologue or proclamation of a mere outsider or heraldic satellite.

It is therefore at the publisher's service for reproduction, either in part or altogether (the long excerpts, as aforesaid, being cancelled or

curtailed, and no other alteration being necessary, unless it might be thought well that a few lines should be added at the end), if Mr. Wells and yourself really think it worthy of the honour, and worth while reprinting at the head of so noble a poem.

Yours very sincerely,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXVIII

To PAUL H. HAYNE

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
July 22nd, 1875.

DEAR SIR,

I received your letter with pleasure, and am sincerely obliged by your kind offer of Poe's autograph, which I should much value. Let me heartily congratulate you on the honour of having been the first to set on foot the project of a monument to that wonderful, exquisite poet. It was time that America should do something to show public reverence for the only one (as yet) among her men of genius who has won not merely English but European fame. As perhaps you know, Poe is even more popular and in general more highly rated, in France

than in England ; thanks to the long, arduous, and faithful labour of his brother-poet and translator, my poor friend, Charles Baudelaire.

On your very flattering estimate of my own work I have, of course, no remark to offer ; but you may be sure that the sympathy expressed in your letter was not lost upon me, and that the knowledge that I have made myself friends in the backwoods (as you say) of America, is much more to me than any average laudatory review.

Mr. Stedman's article, which you sent me some time since, is very far above such average ; I read it with much genuine pleasure and admiration of his fine critical faculty and excellent style. One passage only renews a sense of disappointment, which I have felt before now, both in the writing and the conversation of American friends and authors ; the lack of sympathy with us of the republican party in Europe, who are struggling to win what you have won. To use the old Catholic phrase, applied to the Church on earth and the Church in heaven : the Republic militant has surely some right to the good-will at least and fellow-feeling of the Republic triumphant. But of all your eminent men I know none but Whitman who has said a good word for us, sent us a message of sympathy nobly conceived and worthily expressed, paid in a memorial tribute to the countless heroes and martyrs of our cause. You

see, therefore, that Mr. Stedman's comparative depreciation of my *Songs before Sunrise*, at least his preference of my other books to this one, could not but somewhat disappoint me. For my other books are books ; that one is myself.

You must excuse this opinion, as you have brought it upon yourself, and believe me,

Very sincerely yours,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXIX

To EDMUND GOSSE

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
August 3rd, 1875.

MY DEAR GOSSE,

I cannot wait for the arrival of your article on Herrick (to which I look forward with great satisfaction, and send my thanks for it in advance) to offer you my most sincere congratulations and most cordial good wishes on and for your wedding day. I hope before the year is out I may have the pleasure of meeting for the first time Mrs. Gosse, and thereby of renewing my acquaintance with a lady whose previous name will then be non-existent. I wish you all the joy and good fortune that can

be wished, and without admixture of envy of that particular form of happiness which I am now never likely to share. I suppose it must be the best thing that can befall a man, to win and keep the woman that he loves while yet young; at any rate I can congratulate my friend on his good hap, without any too jealous afterthought of the reverse experience which left my own young manhood "a barren stock"—if I may cite that phrase without seeming to liken myself to a male Queen Elizabeth.

The prints came quite safe, and I wrote a letter of due acknowledgment to M. Mallarmé (whose translation[1] is very exquisite) recalling the fact that twelve years since I visited Manet's studio in Paris with our common friends Whistler and Fantin.

I shall anticipate with real pleasure as well as with high hope the advent of your tragedy.[2] To whom have you sent it? I am much honoured by the prospect of a translation into Danish of the *Songs*, which were cut off from their prospect of a fuller Italian version by the sudden death of the translator (Pr. Maggi of Milan) when he had only done into the verse of their second mother-country, and by adoption my own, one or two of the shorter among them.

[1] The *Poems* of Poe, translated into French prose by Stéphane Mallarmé, with illustrations by Manet.

[2] *King Erik.*

I was very much pleased by the article on Campbell in *The Examiner*, though not quite agreeing with your high estimate of some of his minor ballads and songs: but that is the right side on which to exceed, and with the tone of the whole I most heartily sympathise. It did one good to read it, after W. Rossetti's and other depreciations of our great (if not only) national lyric poet. Of his two master-pieces I should have spoken even more passionately than yourself; for the simple fact is that I know nothing like them at all—"simile aut secundum"—in their own line, which is one of the very highest in the highest range of poetry. What little of national verse is as good patriotically, is far inferior poetically—witness Burns and Rouget de l'Isle; and what little in that line might satisfy us better as poetry than the *Marseillaise* or *Scots wha hae*, is pitifully wanting in the nerve which thrills by contact all the blood of all their hearers, boys and men, students and soldiers, poets and dullards, with one common and divine touch of unquenchable fire. Next to Campbell of course is Callicles, but even the old Attic song of tyrannicide is to me not quite so triumphant a proof of the worth and weight of poetry in national matters. All this and many things more I should myself have liked to say in public; but I could not have held myself in if I had

reviewed the new edition ; I must have smitten Allingham hip and thigh, and made him as the princes "who perished at Endor, and became as"—"poeticules who decompose into criticasters" (I have mentioned "the dung of the earth").

Vale et me ama—after marriage as before. It was very good of you to think of writing at such a time.

Yours affectionately,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXX

To RAPHAËL PÉRIÉ

Ashfield House,
West Malvern,
Vendredi, 27 août, 1875.

MONSIEUR,

Je regrette vivement de ne pas me trouver en ce moment à Londres, afin de pouvoir vous remercier de vive voix des beaux vers que vous avez eu la bonté de m'envoyer et que j'ai lus avec un grand intérêt et une véritable sympathie. Privé de ce plaisir par une absence malencontreuse, je ne saurais mieux vous exprimer mes remercîments qu'en repondant de mon mieux aux demandes que vous m'adressez.

Je crains néanmoins que mes renseignements assez imparfaits ne vous soient que d'une médiocre utilité.

1° Les seules photographies que je connaisse de Walt Whitman sont celles qu'on a publiées en Amérique et que le vieux poète m'a lui-même expédiées. Je crois cependant due mon éditeur actuel, M. A. Chatto (Piccadilly, 75), pourrait vous renseigner à ce sujet. Il a publié en Angleterre les poésies complètes de Whitman, et il doit sans doute savoir si l'on peut se procurer de ces photographies à Londres ;

2° Je crois que Whitman a publié depuis 1872 une petite brochure poétique *As a strong bird on pinions free* qui n'a point reparu en Angleterre, mais que Chatto pourrait probablement vous procurer ;

3° Les œuvres d'Emerson me sont très peu connues, et, je dois vous l'avouer, assez peu sympathiques : je ne sais seulement pas ce qu'en comprend l'édition de Bohn. J'ai entendu dire qu'il se propose de faire paraître un nouveau travail sur la littérature ;

4° Parmi les livres qui ont récemment paru en Angleterre je n'en connais aucun de très remarquable ; mais quant aux revues, je crois pouvoir vous donner meilleurs renseignements. Pour le mouvement littéraire, *l'Academy* me paraît la meilleure de nos revues actuelles ; elle est fort bien dirigée du côté artistique et

scientifique, et en tout ce qui regarde les questions purement littéraires elle dépasse facilement ses émules en journalisme. *L'Examiner*, organe du parti radical ou plutôt de la minorité republicaine en Angleterre, vous tiendra mieux que tout autre journal au courant du mouvement social : rédigé par des démocrates, il envisage ces questions au point de vue de la démocratie, tandis que les feuilles soi-disant "libérales" ne sont pour la plupart que les organes de quelque petite clique religieuse et politique, moitié doctrinaire, moitié clericale. Ce journal est aussi fort bien rédigé du côté littéraire, mais ce n'est point là son métier spécial ; toutefois son rédacteur actuel [1] est un des meilleurs et des plus savants parmi nos jeunes littérateurs ; il a publié une étude remarquable sur la vieille poésie anglaise, depuis ses commencements, jusqu'à l'ère de Shakespeare ét de ses grandes camarades en art.

Ces deux revues sont hebdomadaires ; *La Fortnightly Review* paraissait à son commencement à la quinzaine, ainsi que l'annonce toujours son titre depuis longtemps menteur ; c'est maintenant une revue mensuelle, libre penseuse et démocratique de son naturel, mais se tenant ouverte aux débats politiques et littéraires. Son éditeur, M. John Morley, ajoute à ce moment à ses admirables études sur Voltaire et Rousseau un nouveau

[1] William Minto (1845–93) edited *The Examiner* from 1874 to 1878.

travail non moins remarquable sur Diderot, qui, je l'espère, fera connaître pour la première fois en Angleterre ce grand homme.

Voilà, monsieur, les meilleurs avis que je saurais vous donner à cet égard : je voudrais pouvoir aussi vous envoyer un serrement de main en témoignage de reconnaissance et d'amitié. Merci encore une fois de votre lettre fraternelle et de vos belles et puissantes stances.

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CXXI

To Edmund Clarence Stedman

Holmwood,
Henley on Thames.
September 8th, 1875.

My dear Mr. Stedman,

Many thanks for both your letters, the first received about a month since, the second just arrived enclosing the friendly notice communicated to the *Tribune*. I am sincerely grateful for this and all your good offices, and look forward with even more interest than before to the appearance of your book in its final state.

I read your former letter very carefully and have since re-read a good deal of Emerson's first

volume of poems therein mentioned, which certainly contains noble verses and passages well worth remembering. I hope that no personal feeling or consideration will ever prevent or impair my recognition of any man's higher qualities. In Whittier the power and pathos and righteousness (to use a great old word which should not be left to the pulpiteers) of noble emotion would be more enjoyable and admirable if he were not so deplorably ready to put up with the first word, good or bad, that comes to hand, and to run on long after he is out of breath. For Mr. Lowell's verse when out of the Biglow costume, I could never bring myself to care at all. I believe you know my theory that nothing which can possibly be *as well* said in prose ought ever to be said in verse.

I sincerely hope that your own health and affairs will enable you to pursue our common art with full freedom and success for many years to come. I may confess to you, what I could not gracefully or properly say in public, that I think but little of Tennyson's play,[1] though it has one good song and one good scene at least. I am writing a Greek tragedy,[2] which I mean to be more purely Hellenic and perhaps more universal (so to speak) in its relation to human thought and emotion than was *Atalanta*. The fusion of lyric with dramatic form gives the highest type

[1] *Queen Mary.* [2] *Erechtheus.*

of poetry I know ; and I always feel the Greek history and mythology (in its deeper sense and wider bearing) much nearer to us even yet than those of the Jews, alien from us in blood and character. Even the poet of Job is a Semitic alien, while the poet of Prometheus is an Aryan kinsman of our own : his national history of far more real importance to us, his poetry far closer to our own thought, passion, speculation, conscience, than the Hebrew. This argument, if necessary, I may perhaps expand into a vindication of my choice in taking up what may seem, but is not and should not be, a remote and obsolete theme to work upon.

It may interest you, as it gratified me, to read the following excerpt from a letter of Wm. Rossetti, who with a rare generosity has forgiven my too sincere but I must think deserved strictures on some of his misdemeanours as editor of Shelley.

" (6 *Aug.*) Old Trelawny is extraordinarily delighted with your Essay on Shelley—indeed with your book[1] generally ; vows that nobody ever did justice to or understood S. before you ; —he has enlarged on these matters to me any number of times these two months, and yesterday he specially asked me to let you know and convey his thanks for the book. He has written down various additional reminiscences of Shelley and

[1] *Essays and Studies.*

Byron, and seems really disposed to reissue his book,[1] with these additions included."

With which piece of good news I will leave off, and remain

Ever faithfully yours,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXII

To EDMUND GOSSE

South House,
Southwold,
Wangford.
October 1st, [1875].

MY DEAR GOSSE,

I was very glad to get your note and the Danish translation of my study, which latter has only just reached me. I enclose as you suggest a word of acknowledgment to the translator[2] (as you only mention his surname, I don't know how to address it), though it is rather a task to say anything when you cannot read a word of the language in which an offering of the kind is couched. But I must try to borrow somewhat

[1] *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, 1858 [one vol.]. Enlarged and reissued as *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*, 1878 [two vols.].

[2] Dr. Adolf Hansen.

of the divine daring of our mighty master, and respond as frankly as Hugo does to tributes of English verse and prose.

I presume that you received some two months since my letter of congratulation in answer to that announcing your marriage. I am very glad to hear of your return from the honeymoon, and congratulate you afresh on your new appointment which I saw with great pleasure announced in the newspapers, and am happy to hear it is so good a thing for you in the way of time saved as well as increase of income.

I read your *Herrick* with interest and pleasure, and thought it very well and gracefully done, and as fresh as perhaps anything can now be on the subject. I shall have a good deal to show my friends when I next return to town (I leave this place in a fortnight), and hope to hear that you too have got some good work done. I am always interested to hear of the progress of your play.

Remember me to Mrs. Gosse, and believe me ever,

Yours affectionately,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CXXIII

To Sara Sigourney Rice

November 9th, [1875].

Dear Madame,

I have heard with much pleasure of the memorial at length to be raised to your illustrious fellow-citizen. The genius of Edgar Poe has won on this side of the Atlantic such wide and warm recognition that the sympathy which I cannot hope fitly or fully to express in adequate words is undoubtedly shared at this moment by hundreds as far as the news may have spread throughout not England only but France as well ; where as I need not remind you the most beautiful and durable of monuments has been reared to the genius of Poe by the laborious devotion of a genius equal and akin to his own ; and where the admirable translation of his prose works by a fellow-poet, whom also we have now to lament before his time, is even now being perfected by a careful and exquisite version of his poems, with illustrations full of the subtle and tragic force which impelled and moulded the original song ; a double homage due to the loyal and loving co-operation of one of the most remarkable younger poets and one of the most powerful leading painters in France—M. Mallarmé and M. Manet.

It is not for me to offer any tribute here to the fame of your great countryman, or to dilate with superfluous and intrusive admiration on the special quality of his strong and delicate genius, so sure of aim and faultless of touch in all the better and finer points of work he has left us. I would only, in conveying to the members of the Poe Memorial Committee my sincere acknowledgment of the honour they have done me in recalling my name on such an occasion, take leave to express my firm conviction that widely as the fame of Poe has already spread, and deeply as it is already rooted in Europe, it is even now growing wider and striking deeper as time advances; the surest presage that time, the eternal enemy of small and shallow reputations, will prove in this case also the constant and trusty friend and keeper of a true poet's full-grown fame.

I remain, Dear Madame,
Yours very truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXIV

To Joseph Knight

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
Nov. 28th, 75.

My dear Knight,

I return the enclosed as you desire. I am not sure whether I shall have leisure or inclination to treat of so great a subject within the space and under the circumstances proffered, but if I should I trust that whatever I sent would be "a good letter," in your correspondent's phrase. I have several shorter or longer lyrics in MS., which I should not mind disposing of in the *Athenæum* or elsewhere before they are gathered into a volume.

There is no "secret" about my forthcoming poem, which I hope will be in print by next month's end. It is a play on the Greek model, more regular than *Atalanta;* the title *Erechtheus*, the length a little over 1,700 lines. I mean to read it before publication to a few friends, and shall be very glad if you can make one of the party. I come to town to-morrow (Monday) for some three weeks at least.

I see the *Athenæum* gives high praise to Browning's new "sensation novel." It is a fine

study in the later manner of Balzac, and I always think the great English analyst greatest as he comes nearest in matter and procedure to the still greater Frenchman.

Ever yours,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXV

To EDMUND GOSSE

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 2nd, 1876.

MY DEAR GOSSE,

I must send back a word of acknowledgment for your New Year's note, with all good wishes for 1876 to both of you.

I am glad you find *Erechtheus* hold his own on further acquaintance. Is he and am I to have the pleasure of any public recognition at your hands? "A question which I never asked before," like Sir Christopher Hatton: but you are one of the very few critics whose reviews I care to read for any other reason than the amusement to be derived from such well-meant articles

as that in yesterday's *Athenæum*. "A translation from Euripides"!!!!!!! when a fourth form boy could see that as far as it can be said to be modelled after anybody, it is modelled throughout after the earliest style of Æschylus—the simple, three-parts-epic style of the *Suppliants*, *Persians*, and *Seven against Thebes:* the most radically contrary style to that of the scenic sophist (with his "droppings," as Mrs. Browning aptly rather than delicately puts it[1]) that could possibly be conceived.

I should very much like to see the play of Euripides which contains 500 consecutive lines that could be set against as many of mine. I *did* introduce (instead of a hint and a verse or two acknowledged in my Notes) a good deal of the "long and noble fragment" referred to, into Praxithea's first long speech—but the translated verses (I must say it) were so palpably and pitiably inferior both in thought and expression to the rest that the first persons I read that part of the play to in MS., knowing nothing of Greek (and not being reviewers they made no pretence to the knowledge) remarked the falling off at once—the discrepancy, and blot on the

[1] *Our Euripides, the human—*
With his droppings of warm tears;
And his touches of things common,
Till they rose to touch the spheres!
[Wine of Cyprus, 1844, Stanza 12.]

face of my work—so I excised the sophist—wiped up and carted off his "droppings"—only keeping a hint or two, and one or two of his best lines. If this sounds "outrecuidant" or savouring of "surquedry," you may remember that I always have maintained it is far easier to overtop Euripides by the head and shoulders than to come up to the waist of Sophocles or the knee of Æschylus.

"Sympathetic touch which distinguishes the sophist from the two—there are but two—tragic poets"! Have such critics neither eyes nor ears? Or is there really a human reader who does actually find *Phædra*, *Hecuba*, *Medea*, *Iphigenia*, more *pathetic* than *Antigone*, or the *Oresteia*? To prefer *Bonduca* to *Hamlet*, or *The False One* to *Othello*, is (I had almost said) a venial absurdity in comparison; at least, the one folly is the precise counterpart of the other. And then—the "prodigality of splendid imagery such as finds *no place*" (heavens and earth!) "in Greek literature"!!! Well, it certainly doesn't in Euripides, who was troubled with a dysentery of feeble imagination and a diarrhœa of rhetorical sophistry: but has the man never looked into a "crib" of Pindar? say, Bohn's crib, in which Mr. Emerson gets up his Plato? Why, Isaiah and Ezekiel were timid, reserved, costive, hidebound, in the way of "imagery," compared to Pindar and Æschylus—*the two* Greeks whom, if

I must not say I have tried to follow, I must say I always read with the most passionate sympathy and magnetic attraction to the thought and utterance alike that any poet ever puts into me. Take any great ode of Pindar's, and in the way of wealth and profusion and oppression of inexhaustible imagery, I greatly fear my battle Chorus will read as flat and tame after it as Longfellow after Shelley.

That chorus seems to have produced on *The Spectator* the exact effect I intended; but isn't it characteristic to fasten on the one word "aweless," assume that it means "irreverent," and pin to it a screed of doctrine enlarging on the incompatibility of such an epilogue to such a poem? The fact that the poem is throughout (as he admits) imbued with awe and reverence towards the moral and religious law of nature (not of theology) I should have thought enough to prove that this one word could not be used in a sense so inconsistent with all the rest. But, of course, a sermon was necessary.

I did not mean to trouble you with so long and certainly not with so egoistic an epistle: but it is the fault of your sympathy with my work, and I must count upon that to excuse it, even though I add that I hope you will like (what I think you have not seen or heard) my little poem in two sonnets on Newman and Carlyle (as you will, of course, at once perceive, though no

names are mentioned), in the next *Athenæum*. "Childless" they certainly are: for the Church or the God of the Past is not likely ever again to enlist such a recruit as Newman, and any possible heir to the theories, would assuredly not be heir to the genius, of Carlyle.

I should like to know what you think of my study on *King John*[1] now published in *The Fortnightly*; of the companion study on *Henry 8th*, I remember that I once read you the greater part. Observe that there are four damnable misprints in the article: p. 28 "comic or prosaic *sense* alone" for *scenes*; p. 29 "equally—*as* to a poet" instead of "*or* to a poet," etc.; p. 30 (two lines from bottom) "*forms* of accent" for *turns*; and p. 44 "tedious and *traceless* verse" instead of *tuneless*. (I know I corrected this in the proof!)

Yours affectionately,
A. C. SWINBURNE

[1] *The Three Stages of Shakespeare*, in *The Fortnightly Review*, January, 1876.

LETTER CXXVI[1]

To Stéphane Mallarmé

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
13 Janvier, 1876.

Cher Monsieur,

Voici déjà dix jours que je diffère les remerciements que j'aurais dû vous adresser le jour même de l'an, en recevant comme étrennes vos paroles cordiales et chargées d'une invitation si flatteuse qu'elle caresse en moi quelque chose de meilleur, je l'espère, qu'un vain orgueil. J'ai toujours senti que les liens de race et de reconnaissance qui rattachent à la France les rejetons d'une famille autrefois proscrite par nos guerres civiles, qui a deux fois et pendant des générations entières trouvé en elle une nouvelle mère-patrie, me donnaient le droit de réclamer ma part de joie ou de douleur dans toutes ses gloires et dans tous ses malheurs ; mais jamais je n'aurais songé à réclamer la place que vous voulez bien m'accorder parmi ses[2] poëtes contemporains. C'est vous dire combien je serai fier de me trouver votre

[1] This letter, together with the *Nocturne* which accompanied it, was published in *La République des Lettres*, 20 *Février*, 1876. The *Nocturne* itself was reprinted in *Poems and Ballads*, *Second Series*, 1878, pp. 227–229.

[2] Mallarmé altered "parmi" to "auprès de."

collaborateur, et combien je suis heureux de vous adresser, comme à M. Mendès, les grâces que je vous dois d'avoir songé à moi en fondant votre revue.[1] On m'a dit que M. Mendès avait publié il y a quelques ans une étude sur mes poésies que je n'ai pu jusqu'ici me procurer par le moyen des libraires ; je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire combien cette défaite m'a chagriné, et combien j'ose encore espérer aussi bien que souhaiter de lire un jour ce qu'un poëte dont j'admire ardemment le talent exquis[2] a bien voulu dire de moi à *notre* France —permettez-moi le mot, en faveur de la parenté dont j'ai déjà eu l'egoïsme de me vanter.

Je vous envoie un petit poëme d'un genre que je croyais nouveau quand je l'ai fait, mais dont je crois avoir depuis vu des échantillons en français comme en italien. Après avoir introduit dans la poésie anglaise cette forme qui m'avait plu surtout dans la traduction faite par M. Rossetti d'un poëme apocryphe de Dante—en y ajoutant l'entrecroisement des rimes à chaque strophe, ce qui m'a paru de toute nécessité pour une *sextine*[3] ecrite dans une langue moins douce que celle de ses inventeurs—je me suis hasardé à tenter cette même entreprise en français. Maintenant, j'ai à vous demander une faveur ; c'est de

[1] "En fondant votre revue" was printed by Mallarmé "quand se fonda la *République des Lettres.*"

[2] The word "exquis" was omitted by Mallarmé.

[3] Mallarmé altered this word to *sestine.*

me faire savoir s'il n'y a pas par hasard dans mes vers français quelque anglicisme, quelque phrase louche ou dure, quelque chose enfin qu'un poëte né en France ne se serait point permis ou bien qu'il aurait tout de suite effacé de son texte. Pour rien au monde je ne voudrais encourir la juste peine du ridicule qui châtierait une faute pareille. Un ami m'a fait voir autrefois une lettre, d'ailleurs fort bienveillante à mon égard, dans laquelle un éminent critique français qualifiait quelques vers de moi qu'on lui avait montrés *d'efforts d'un géant barbare*. Cette phrase ne froissa point en moi une vanité ridicule, mais elle éveilla une juste méfiance de moi-même ; c'est pourquoi je vous prie instamment de m'indiquer la moindre faute qui pourrait frapper vos yeux. Ce n'est qu'à cette condition que je pourrais écrire ou dépêcher avec confiance les contributions que je voudrais offrir à la Revue, dont j'attends impatiemment le premier numéro, et plus impatiemment encore l'arrivée des deux livres que vous voulez bien m'adresser. J'espère que vous aurez déjà reçu des mains de mon éditeur l'offrande du poëme hellenique[1] que je viens de publier, et que je l'ai prié de vous envoyer en mon nom ?

Croyez, cher Monsieur, à toutes mes sympathies et à toute ma reconnaissance.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

[1] *Erechtheus.*

NOCTURNE

La nuit écoute et se penche sur l'onde
Pour recueillir[1] *rien qu'un souffle d'amour ;*
Pas de lueur, pas de musique au monde,
Pas de sommeil pour moi ni de séjour.
O mère, ô Nuit, de ta source profonde
Verse-nous, verse enfin l'oubli du jour.

Verse l'oubli de l'angoisse et du jour ;
Chante ; ton chant assoupit l'âme et l'onde :
Fais de ton sein pour mon âme un séjour,
Elle est bien lasse, ô mère, de ce monde,
Où le baiser ne veut pas dire amour,
Ou l'âme aimée est moins que toi profonde.

Car toute chose aimée est moins profonde,
O Nuit, que toi, fille et mère du jour ;
Toi dont l'attente est le répit du monde,
Toi dont le souffle est plein de mots d'amour,
Toi dont l'haleine enfle et réprime l'onde,
Toi dont l'ombre a tout le ciel pour séjour.

La misère humble et lasse, sans séjour,
S'abrite et dort sous ton aile profonde ;
Tu fais à tous l'aumône de l'amour ;
Toutes les soifs viennent boire à ton onde,
Tout ce qui pleure et se dérobe au jour,
Toutes les faims et tous les maux du monde.

[1] In the published text, *y cueillir.*

Moi seul je veille et ne vois dans ce monde
Que ma douleur qui n'ait point de séjour
Où s'abriter sur ta rive profonde
Et s'endormir sous tes yeux loin du jour ;
Je vais toujours cherchant au bord de l'onde
L'orme[1] *du beau pied blessé de l'amour.*

La mer est sombre où tu naquis, Amour,
Pleine des pleurs et des sanglots du monde ;
On ne voit plus les gouffres loin du jour[2]
Luire et frémir sous ta lueur profonde ;
Mais dans les cœurs d'homme où tu fais séjour
La douleur monte et baisse comme une onde.

ENVOI

Fille de l'onde et mère de l'amour,
Du haut séjour plein de ta paix profonde
Sur ce bas monde épands un peu de jour.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

[1] It was impossible to conjecture what Swinburne meant by the word *orme*, and Mallarmé substituted *Le sang*.
[2] Mallarmé altered this to *le gouffre où naît le jour*.

LETTER CXXVII

To Edmund Gosse

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
January 14th, [1876].

My dear Gosse,

I have read your fine poem[1] through from beginning to end, almost at a sitting, with unbroken and unflagging interest. I congratulate you heartily on the accomplishment of a noble work. It must raise your name at once into a higher and clearer celebrity. The story seems to me in the highest degree and in the noblest sense tragic and pathetic. If the pretty tho' certainly cumbersome old fashion of commendatory verses had been retained or revived (but what *would* New Grub Street not say, in such a case, concerning "mutual admiration"? I shudder to think) I should have liked to prefix a line or two to your tragedy.

Excellently as the leading characters are conceived and sustained throughout, I am especially struck by the admirable instinct and intuitive sense of right with which you have kept down the part of Grimur beneath any danger of

[1] *King Erik* [1876].

interference with the interest which should be (as it is without break or flaw) concentrated on the figure of the King. Erik's two public speeches—the latter more especially, as king, delivered under more tragic circumstances—seem to me models of poetic oratory, just enough and not too much raised above mere rhetorical eloquence. Once or twice the terse keen clearness, the point and weight of a line or phrase, reminded me not unworthily of Landor: and you know how much in my case that implies. I should like to know what Browning thinks of your book.

I was much interested by the extracts you sent me from Newman's letter,[1] which you once

[1] The reference is to a letter from Cardinal Newman, still unpublished, dated December 1, 1873, in which the following passage occurs:—

I am likely to use strong words for two reasons, because I do not know familiarly the poets of this day, and because I do know those of my own youth. Those poets were accustomed to write in a style which, so far from hurting, would benefit their readers; as, for instance, Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, Crabbe, Campbell—nay, I will add Byron and Moore, for though they both wrote immoral works, yet it was definite volumes which incurred that disgrace, and one might put them aside, yet read with interest and pleasure, other works of those authors, as *Childe Harold*, and (as far as I recollect) *Lalla Rookh*. (There are one or two sceptical stanzas in *Childe Harold*, but they are accidental.) As far as I can make out from reviews, etc., the case is quite different as regards Swinburne and Rosetti [*sic*]; their poems are soaked in an ethical quality, whatever it is to be called, which would have made it impossible in the last generation for a brother to read them to a sister. . . . Protestants do not understand, as Catholics do,

mentioned to me before: and amused beyond measure at a Catholic leader finding "amorousness" and "religion such irreconcilable elements." (Well, at any rate, *I* can hardly be accused of trying to reconcile Venus and Mary, or Jesus and Priapus.) But has he never heard of the last goddess of his Church, Marie Alacoque, the type and incarnation of *furor uterinus?* It may be convenient, but it is at least cool, for a priest of that faith to forget that his Church has always naturally and necessarily been the nursing mother of "pale religious lechery" (as Blake with such grand scorn labels the special quality of celibate sanctity "that wishes but acts not"), of holy priapism and virginal nymphomania. Not to speak of the filthy visions of the rampant and rabid nun who founded "the worship of the Sacred Heart" (she called it heart; in the phallic processions they called it by a more and less proper name), he might have found passages from St. Theresa which certainly justify from a carnal point of view her surname of the Christian Sappho. There is as much detail, if I mistake not (judging by extracts), in her invocation of her Phaon—Jesus Christ—as in the *Ode to Anactoria* itself—which, as Byron

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that not only grave sins of impurity, but that everything which savours of or tends towards impurity, is wrong too.

justly observes, is not "a good example." As for my poor paraphrase, it (with *Dolores* and the rest) is too mild and maidenly for mention in the same year.

I read your article on *Erechtheus* with pleasure but cannot judge of your comparison of the plot with that of Euripides, as I know only one of the fragments—or "droppings"—of his play.

Ever affectionately yours,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXVIII

To Lord Morley

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
February 1st, 1876.

My dear Morley,

I have just finished a poem[1] which I should like to see in the *Fortnightly*, but it is "of first necessity" to trouble you and myself with the base consideration of the question of finance; so I plunge at once into that miry

[1] "*The Last Oracle*, A.D. 361." The poem did not appear in *The Fortnightly Review*, but was published in *Poems and Ballads, Second Series*, 1878.

subject, to be done with it the quicker. You see when I send a little thing, sonnet or song of but a dozen lines, elsewhere, I never get less than £10 down, reserving any profits by music or such like that may accrue, and though of course I don't (I wish I could!) expect to have my work paid for according to that tariff on a regularly ascending scale still I have to expect more, in some reasonable proportion, for a poem nine or ten times the length of such a piece, as the present poem is. I hope you know that I don't make more of a trade of my work than I can help; only the other day I sent a thing by preference to a paper to which I wished well which could only afford to give a quarter exactly of the sum offered for a like amount of work by another paper just before, which offer was not accepted—not out of any objection, I ought to say, to the latter equally respectable but not equally "advanced" and consequently richer journal. Still, as we know on higher than mere human authority, the labourer is worthy of his hire; and it seems to me simpler and more straightforward to lay the question before you at once and so leave it; under which circumstances I shall of course not be hurt, disappointed, or offended, if you find it better to decline dealing at my shop on the average terms of the market.

So much for the Grub Street side of the

matter ; and I will not press my wares by any further advertisement than a mention of the subject, which starts from the message sent back (to the effect that there was none) from Delphi to Julian when he sent to consult the oracle the year of his accession, and passes into an invocation of the healing and destroying God of song and of the sun, taken as the type of the "light of thought" and spirit of speech which makes and unmakes gods within the soul that it makes vocal and articulate from age to age ; not really therefore son of Zeus the son of Chronos, but older than all time we can take count of, and father of all possible gods fashioned by the human spirit out of itself for types of worship.

This sounds rather metaphysical, but I don't think the verse is obscure or turbid—the form of a hymn or choral chant, and the alternate metre of twelve long trochaic lines and twelve shorter anapæstic, carry the thought on and carry off the symbolic or allegoric ambiguity ; at least so I flatter myself. But I must not be recommending this superior article now in stock by putting my own price on it in the style of the poets of *The Dunciad*. I need hardly warn you that it is *not* exactly qualified by its tone to conciliate a Christian public ; tho' I have somewhat softened the anti-Galilean fervour of my first conceptions.

Have you seen the new edition of my old

friend Phraxanor?[1] I am anxious she should have more success with the public than with Joseph of old, and that her old poet should have a parting round of long-deferred applause to cheer his own exit from the stage—for a man of his age must be considered as having got into his fifth act.

I have just been reading Meredith's book[2] which I only tried by fits and starts as it was coming out in the *Fortnightly*. Full of power and beauty and fine truthfulness as it is, what a noble book it might and should have been, if he would but have foregone his lust of epigram and habit of trying to tell a story by means of riddles that hardly excite the curiosity they are certain to baffle! By dint of revulsion from Trollope on this hand and Braddon on that, he seems to have persuaded himself that limpidity of style must mean shallowness, lucidity of narrative must imply triviality, and simplicity of direct interest or positive incident must involve "sensationalism." It is a constant irritation to see a man of such rarely strong and subtle genius, such various and splendid forces of mind, do so much to justify the general neglect he provokes. But what noble powers there are visible in almost all parts of his work.

[1] *Joseph and his Brethren*, 1876.
[2] *Beauchamp's Career*.

I hear he has written a very fine poem on the death of Attila.

Have you seen a new magazine started in Paris—*La République des Lettres?* I, as a French poet of the day, have been solicited to help in setting it on foot, together with Leconte de Lisle (do you know his works? I have but lately begun to read them, often with the highest admiration and enjoyment), Flaubert, and younger men of note. The editor is Catulle Mendès, Th. Gautier's son-in-law. I have just had an ecstatic letter acknowledging a poem I sent—an attempt to adapt to French verse the complex metre of an Italian sestina.

I hope this long letter will not find you overwhelmed with graver work and disposed to receive it with an execration; but in any case I am,

Yours very sincerely,
A. C. Swinburne.

P.S.—Can you tell me whether the text of that glorious little black masterpiece the *Neveu de Rameau*, published last year (1875) by Jouaust (Libraires des Bibliophiles) is trustworthy, and as correct as it is pretty? And have you detected (not in that quarter) Browning's wholesale plagiarism from Diderot of a plot which he has completely spoilt?

LETTER CXXIX

To Stéphane Mallarmé

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
5 Février, 1876.

Cher Monsieur, et trop généreux confrère,

Je prends pour vous répondre le revers d'une feuille qui vient de me servir pour y griffonner une traduction de la fameuse ballade-épitaphe de Villon "pour luy et ses compaignons" que j'ai essayé de mettre en vers anglais je ne sais combien de fois depuis le jour où je suis sorti de collège, c'est à dire depuis bientôt seize ans ; enfin je crois y avoir réussi tout d'un trait, en conservant l'ordre des rimes ; seulement j'ai cru pouvoir me permettre de changer—peut-être de défigurer—ce vers :

"Plus becquetez d'oyseaulx, que dez à couldre"—

ce qui me paraît intraduisible, à moins de faire une faute plus grave encore que cette infidélité, c'est à dire d'attribuer à ce grand maître un vers faible ou dur. Que Villon me pardonne ! et je crois qu'il le doit, puisque j'ai beaucoup travaillé à la reproduction de plusieurs de ses meilleures pièces. Mais en ce pays vertueux il n'est point

encore permis de faire imprimer les louanges de la belle Heaulmière et de la grosse Margot. Rossetti et moi nous avions autrefois l'idée de traduire en entier l'œuvre de ce grand poëte, qui complète selon moi la trinité poétique du moyen âge où se trouvent représentées trois nations et trois couches sociales. Dante, type de l'Italie et de l'aristocratie ; Chaucer, type de l'Angleterre et de la haute bourgeoisie ; Villon, type de la France et du peuple, que je mets après Dante et (malgré toute mon admiration pour ce grand conteur humoristique et chevaleresque) avant Chaucer. Vous devez sans doute connaître les trois admirables traductions de Rossetti, à cette époque mon frère aîné en poésie, qui a mis en anglais la ballade à la Vierge, celle des "neiges d'antan" et le rondeau sur la Mort.

Je ne saurais vraiment vous dire, cher Monsieur, combien je suis ravi que ma Sextine ait trouvé chez vous un si favorable accueil. Vous avez sans doute raison de préférer

"Pour y cueillir rien qu'un souffle d'amour"

à la lecture originale qui entraîne un tel concours de *r*—"la lettre des chiens," comme dit la nourrice de Juliette à Roméo. Sans cela, je crois que j'aurais préféré à cet endroit le mot "recueillir" au mot "cueillir" puisque "cueillir" un souffle comme si c'était une fleur ou quelque chose de pareil me paraît une phrase plus hasardée et

peut-être moins propre que celle de recueillir, de ramasser et d'emporter le souffle fugitif de l'haleine de la mer, pris dans les ailes ou la robe traînante de la Nuit. Mais je dois vous demander pardon d'avoir exprimé un avis quelconque à ce sujet, puisqu' après tout cette langue si chérie n'est pas ma langue natale. Cependant je ne comprends plus par quel hasard j'ai pu écrire ce malheureux mot *orme* au vers sixième de la cinquième stance ; il y avait d'abord ce vers que j'ai rejeté, je ne sais plus pourquoi :

"Où s'est posé le pied nu de l'amour."

On pourrait lire aussi :

"La trace en feu du pied nu de l'amour,"

ou bien :

"Les pas perdus (*ou* sanglants) du fugitif amour."

Je crois, si cela ne vous déplaisait point, que je préférerais cette dernière variante. Il ne semble maintenant qu'en transcrivant cette stance j'ai dû songer sans y prendre garde, au mot italien *orma*, et qu'égaré par le son des mots j'ai écrit par étourderie *orme* au lieu de *trace*. Evidemment ce mot malencontreux s'est trouvé par mégarde sous ma plume et je ne m'étonne point qu'il vous ait donné de la peine.

Le lendemain du jour où je vous ai écrit j'ai reçu le premier numéro de la *République des*

Lettres que j'ai lu avec beaucoup d'intérêt et de plaisir. J'ai été surtout frappé de votre belle et sombre idée du *phénomène futur* et des vers exquis que vous a dédiés M. Léon Dierx, qui m'ont rappelé une esquisse merveilleuse de Leonardo da Vinci que j'ai vue autrefois à Florence. J'attends avec une reconnaissance impatiente la lecture de votre "paraphe" à propos de mon *Erectheus*, poëme assez bien accueilli en Angleterre, et que je crois un de mes meilleurs.

On m'a transmis d'Amérique il y a quelques jours un bout de journal où se trouvait imprimée ma lettre sur Poe. Je suis heureux que le petit mot que j'ai pu dire en passant sur votre œuvre admirable vous ait plu, à vous et à M. Manet, à qui je vous prie de faire parvenir l'expression de mon sentiment. Vous devez tous les deux recevoir bientôt—je le crains, du moins—une photographie a faire dresser les cheveux du monument qu'on vient d'infliger à ce pauvre mort, monument d'une laideur impossible et *transatlantique*.

Au revoir, cher Monsieur, et mille remerciements de votre lettre charmente.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Excusez ce mauvais bout de feuille et ce griffonnage tout barbouillé de ratures ; je vous écris en ami, c'est à dire à la hâte et *librement*.

A. C. S.

J'allais oublier de vous demander un conseil sur le premier vers de la quatrième stance (à propos, je ne tiens pas du tout à la conservation des chiffres, dont vous avez bien voulu vous occuper) de ma sextine. J'avais écrit d'abord :

"Sous le soleil qui n'a pas de séjour
S'abrite et dort sous ton aile profonde,"

ce qui me paraît valoir mieux que la variante :

"La misère humble et lasse, sans séjour," *etc.*,

mais on y avait trouvé quelque chose comme un quiproquo, quoique pour moi je ne vois[1] rien d'équivoque à cette phrase, que je serais bien aise de rétablir au texte si vous ne la trouvez point inadmissible. Pardon de cette nouvelle peine que j'inflige à votre bienveillance, mais vous comprenez bien que je tiens à paraître devant le public français ajusté de mon mieux.

J'a commencé un petit travail que je me propose d'offrir a la *Republique des Lettres*, sur le grand peintre-poëte, William Blake, que je crois à peu près inconnu en France. J'ai publié sur lui il y a sept ans une assez longue étude et j'ai cru pouvoir donner un abrégé de sa vie, avec quelques extraits de ses poésies qui peut-être ne

[1] It has been suggested that this word should read "voie," and it is true that the "quoique" is usually followed by a subjunctive. But it does not seem certain that Swinburne did not prefer to use the indicative here, and in any case his orthography must be respected.

seraient pas sans intérêt pour les poëtes français. Mais depuis que nous avons perdu Baudelaire il n'y a qui vous qu pourriez dignement entreprendre cette tâche glorieuse dont j'ose à peine me charger, mais dont je compte avant peu vous envoyer quelques échantillons.

LETTER CXXX

To Lord Morley

Holmwood,
Henley on Thames.
Feb. 13th, 1876.

My dear Morley,

I send herewith my poem[1] direct to your address. As to the question of fee, you understand that I did not like to "put a price upon it" myself, nor yet to address you in the phrase of Mrs. Gamp, with "Give it a name, I beg"; but that though I certainly do not (as I said before) expect to be paid for a poem of this length in proportion to what I should get elsewhere for a poem of 12 lines or so, which would make the cost of the present article a little over £100, a sum which you possibly might not be disposed to offer for a contribution not signed by the hallowed and official name of a Laureate,

[1] *The Last Oracle.*

still I don't want or can't afford to sell the first fruits of it for less than what may seem a reasonable advance on the minimum of £10 which I receive for the shortest metrical contributions elsewhere, however modest a multiple of that minimum might be the sum you might care to offer or I to accept. As your note does not "give it a name," and as it is (alas!) necessary to refer to the sordid subject in a world where (for one thing) tradesmen actually have the audacity to expect payment for goods which they have the honour of supplying to their betters, I am obliged, before going further in the matter, to return to this point in the briefest and frankest terms I can find; though at the same time, considering the relations in which we stand to each other, I see no reason for not sending you the poem by the same post which takes this letter, instead of waiting to send it till I get an answer. As I have not made a second copy of it I shall be glad to hear of its safe arrival.

Many thanks for answering my query about "Rameau." I read your remarks on it lately, while the impression of it was fresh on my mind after a first study, and heartily agreed with them —except perhaps that I might feel inclined to think it *would* be highly desirable that the dialogue should be generally or universally circulated and studied as a drastic remedy which might kill or cure the bastard brood of New Grub Street,

creatures " of no woman born," but monstrously begotten by Thersites on Trimalchio. Certainly Diderot's lesson is not out of date in an age and country which produces and maintains such phenomena as the *World* newspaper.

If Browning did not consciously steal, and unconsciously and unconsionably spoil in the stealing, the episode of Jules the sculptor's marriage in " Pippa Passes " from the " Histoire de Mme. de la Pommeraye et du marquis des Arcis," in *Jacques le Fataliste*, then all incredible coincidences must henceforth be held credible. The minute I saw the gist of Diderot's story I recognised the admirable original of a decidedly unadmirable copy. As the work of a slighted woman's revenge, the conception seems to me most terribly and almost grandly natural ; as the device of a male crew of jealous rival artists, absurdly false, and repulsive by reason of its absurdity. I am sure you will agree with me, but I should like to hear that you did. I have only seen the episodes from *Jacques* extracted in the *Oeuvres Choisies de Diderot* (ed. 1874) which I find to be also *oeuvres chatrées* a la Bowdler, giving the mere husk shell of " La Religeuse " for instance.

I shall have to invest, as I foresaw, in Assezat's edition ; I bought this one thinking it would give the select works but not the garbled works of Diderot, and that what it gave would be given

entire; and there is at least one of Diderot's works, of which, having once opened and instantly shut it again before I had read the first page on which I lighted (which happened to be in English, with polyglot accompaniments), I hope I need not say that I did *not* "desire the further acquaintance." But for all that I cannot put up with castrations; I say of every book, what I do not by any means say of every author, "Tout ou rien."

I have just been correcting the proof of a French poem[1]; I hope to heaven the cabalistic printer's signs which I never feel sure about are the same (do you know if they are?) in French as in English; if not, God knows what sort of "pie" will be the result, unless my editor looks to it. My last published notes on Shakespeare in the *Fortnightly Review* have procured me another good thing besides the enmity of the scholiasts (on whom I am writing a burlesque "Report of the proceedings of the Newest Shakespeare Society"),[2] in the shape of a gift from Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps of his splendid folio on matters connected with the life and work of Shakespeare, with which I have as yet only

[1] *Nocturne*, first published in *La République des Lettres*, February 20, 1876, and afterwards included in *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series, 1878, pp. 79–80.

[2] Printed in the *Examiner*, April 1, 1876, and reprinted in *A Study of Shakespeare*, 1880, pp. 276–300.

played, not grappled, but see much of real interest in it.

Do you see how the *Saturday* walks into my poor old friend Phraxanor? I hope the critics generally will follow rather in the wake of the *Athenæum* in this matter; I am really anxious to get some little public recognition at last for our oldest living poet.

Ever yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CXXXI

To Stéphane Mallarmé

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
14 *Février*, 1876.

Cher Monsieur,

Un mot de remerciement pour vos deux lettres, celle de Vendredi et celle d'hier. Je suis heureux que la dernière variante vous ait plu. Sans attendre votre réponse, j'avais déjà pris sur moi de substituer dans l'épreuve cette leçon à la précédente. J'ai aussi adressé un mot à M. Mendès pour indiquer ou pour expliquer les changements faits selon votre conseil aussi bien que ceux que je lui soumettais en renvoyant l'épreuve. Il va sans dire qu'en recevant votre

première lettre, qui est héureusement arrivée à l'instant même où j'allais dépêcher cette épreuve, je me suis empressé de suivre vos conseils et sur le mot *cueillir* et sur le *pied de l'amour*. Sans vous c'est le poëme qui ce trouverait boiteux de ce pied-là.

Je ne sais si vous préférez ou non le vers

"Sous le soleil," *etc.*,

mais je m'en suis rapporté au jugement de M. Mendès.

Merci encore une fois de vos bons conseils et de la peine que vous avez bien voulu vous donner à mon égard au moment même où vous étiez préoccupé d'affaires personnelles d'une bien plus grande importance. Je suis ravi d'entendre que vous devez nous donner un drame.[1] Moi-même en ce moment je travaille à poser pour ainsi dire les fondements de l'œuvre qui doit compléter ma trilogie de *Marie Stuart*. Pas une scène de cette troisième et dernière partie n'est encore écrite, mais je m'occupe déjà d'en établir les trucs et d'en lier l'action tragique. J'attendrai avec impatience des nouvelles de votre drame. A propos, il faudrait mettre sur l'adresse des lettres le nom de la ville de ce canton, *Henley-on-Thames*, après

[1] Mallarmé, who had no genius for play-writing, was always dreaming of an ideal theatre. Perhaps what is referred to here is *Hérodiade*, the fragment of which, in dialogue, was at this time much occupying his thoughts.

et non avant celui de la maison de compagne, *Holmwood*, sans quoi les courriers pourront se tromper et les lettres s'égarer. Pardon de ce détail ; je crois que votre lettre de Vendredi a dû être retardée par cet accident ou bien par la bêtise des courriers.

Tout à vous,
ALGERNON CH. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXXII

TO LORD HOUGHTON

3 Great James Street.
March 13, [1876 ?].

MY DEAR LORD HOUGHTON,

I shall be very happy to accompany you to lunch at Mrs. Greville's. . . . On which day and at what hour shall I call for you in Clifford St.? If there is a chance of seeing Mr. Irving, I shall be all the more happy, as, having exchanged hospitalities of club and chambers with him last autumn, I have had occasion to find him one of the nicest fellows I have met for a long time. Indeed, I liked him so much that I never would go—and never yet have been—to see him act Hamlet.

Yours ever,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXXIII

To John Churton Collins

Holmwood,
March 27th, [1876].

My dear Collins,

Your letter gave me great pleasure and a sense of something, in the rather dull monotonous puppet-show of my life, which often strikes me as too barren of action or enjoyment to be much worth holding on to, better than nothingness, or at least seeming better for a minute. As I don't myself know any pleasure physical or spiritual (except what comes of the sea) comparable to that which comes of verse in its higher moods, I am certainly glad to know that I can give this to others as others again have given it to me. Your letter in its fullness of generous enthusiasm makes me look over my battle chorus[1] again and I confess I am content with it. But it is odd how a book once published goes out of my head—drops as it were out of one's life or thought, not to be taken up again for many days. Till it is in print, it is still part of oneself, and concerns one's thoughts, and one takes a personal interest in it which vanishes on publication; so at least I find. *E.g.* I am

[1] In *Erechtheus.*

still interested about my Delphic poem which I should like to read to you, as I should also like to run up as you propose, whether to throw myself on your hospitality or not. But I want to get a little work done this spring, and London living disagrees with my work. Watts has got my poem on a dead garden[1] — I believe it is booked for *The Athenæum*. On Saturday you will see a *Report*[2] of mine in *The Examiner*, which I hope may waken some echo in the Press, and do some service to the cause of Shakespeare by brushing off his pedestal the most pestilent swarm of parasites that ever settled there. Did you see *The Academy* letter (Jan. 29th) in which the head of the crew exhorted me "to try and learn" of *him*, "educate my ears and eyes" to the understanding of metre, poetic style, English rhythm, and the text of Shakespeare!

I am very glad to hear of the great Cyril coming on. Mr. Grosart in his correspondence asks after it persistently. Do take the opportunity of giving a stripe—or many stripes— to the damnable incompetence and impudence with which the new editor of Dodsley (W. C. Hazlitt) has mangled and defaced beyond recognition

[1] *A Forsaken Garden*, printed in *The Athenæum* for July 22nd, 1876, p. 112.

[2] *Report of the First Anniversary Meeting of the Newest Shakespeare Society*, April 1, 1876.

in many of its finest passages the text of *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The sight of it put me into such a rage ten days ago that I wanted to write to you on the subject on the spot, but knew not where to have you. Is the present address "perdurably" safe?

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXXIV

To LORD HOUGHTON

Holmwood.
March 29th, [1876].

DEAR LORD HOUGHTON,

I have written to the Hon. Sec. of the Byron Committee that I should not be in town on the next day of meeting. Even if I were, I should not be much disposed to attend, as though I grudge neither my name nor my subscription, I did not join the movement till Mr. Trelawny's nomination of me made it (of course) impossible for me to decline; tho' I certainly do not expect anything very creditable to result from the consignment of Byron's memory and memorial to the tender mercies of the British image-maker, and the patronage of the illustrious author of the

Revolutionary Epic—who might I think be content with unmaking a queen in the process of making an empress, and leave us others alone dead or alive. However, his last move is all in our favour, such of us as are good republicans.

Have you seen a magazine conducted by A. V[acquerie], and other French poets,—*La République des Lettres?* It is the second time I have been solicited to let myself be enrolled as contributor to a Paris periodical, and this time I have consented so far as to give them a poem for the third number, which has been acclaimed as the best of its kind in the language, and a half promise of scribbling more in prose and verse. The Lamb was sent for from London, and came safe. I was rather amazed yesterday on seeing the direction of an American journal forwarded through your hands, as your note just received explains. . . . I am sorry to see poor old Whitman seems to be in such a bad way as to health and means (also, if one may judge by extracts, to be writing such damned and damnable rubbish!). I hoped one might infer the contrary from the pleasant little word you sent me concerning him in a former letter. I hope (though *The Saturday Review* and *Daily News* be unpropitious) that something may come of the movement here in his favour. If you look into this week's *Examiner* you will see an attempt on my part to do something towards brushing away the

most pestilent swarm of parasites that ever yet settled on the name and the text of Shakespeare.[1]

I am ever yours truly,

A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CXXXV

To Stéphane Mallarmé

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
1 *Juin* [1876].

Cher Monsieur,

Merci mille fois de votre merveilleux petit joyau de poésie[2] si dignement et si délicatement enchâssé comme un diamant dans un écrin de perles. Vous êtes bien heureux d'avoir à Paris des éditeurs ou des bijoutiers capables de ce travail exquis et parfait. Une chose si belle de toutes parts doit bien faire crier les imbéciles plus haut encore qu'ils ne hurlent à Londres contre le " poëme païen et dégoûtant " du *Last Oracle*. J'ai reçu le vôtre il y a deux jours seulement au retour d'un voyage à Guernsey

[1] *Report of the First Anniversary of the Newest Shakespeare Society*, printed in *The Examiner*, April 1, 1876. Reprinted in *A Study of Shakespeare*, 1880, pp. 276–300.

[2] No doubt the first edition of *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, 1876.

(l'île veuve) et à Sark, qui dépasse même les éloges d'Auguste Vacquerie. Moi, nourri aux bords de la mer, je n'ai jamais rien vu de si charmant.

Grâce aux bons soins de M. Payne votre livre n'est parvenu sans tache ni froissement. Je suis à présent très occupé, mais j'espère pouvoir terminer (je ne sais pas quand) mes notes sur Blake, dont on s'occupe fort ici en ce moment. Une société d'artistes ou d'amateurs vient de donner une exposition de ses œuvres.[1] Il s'y trouve quelque nudités assez innocentes, quelquefois un peu gauches ; aussi un article de journal, écrit à ce qu'on prétend par un *clergyman* et dicté par sa femme, ne manqua-t-il pas de crier à l'indécence. Depuis ce jour-là, comme vous pensez, la petite salle d'exposition est tellement encombrée de femmes et surtout de jeunes filles accompagnées de leurs pères, etc., que l'on ne voit presque les tableaux mystiques qui m'ont paru dérouter tant soit peu l'attente et même l'intelligence de ces dames.

Mille amitiés,

A. C. Swinburne.

[1] This was the very important exhibition of William Blake's pictures and other works, opened in the Burlington Club (17, Savile Row) in March, 1876, and kept open for three or four months. This "extraordinary and splendid spectacle," as Rossetti called it, produced a deep sensation in English art circles.

LETTER CXXXVI

To Edmund Gosse

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
October 17th, [1876].

My dear Gosse,

I am very much obliged by your kind offer of a relic[1] which I shall value very much on all accounts. I am very sorry to hear that Mrs. Gosse has been so ill. It seems to have been a bad season for health. I have been very ill myself for some time. (I don't know whether you heard from any quarter of my being accidentally poisoned some months since by the perfume of Indian lilies in a close bed-room—which sounds romantic, but was horrible in experience, and I have not yet wholly recovered the results, or regained my strength.)

I have not yet seen a copy of Grosart's *Herrick*—rather to my surprise. I suppose the delay lies at Chatto's door. When well enough to write I shall review his *Barnfield* in the *Athenæum*.[2] I am very sorry the text of his

[1] An unpublished copy of verses by W. S. Landor, in his own handwriting.

[2] Swinburne failed to carry this project into execution.

introduction to *Herrick* is so full of misprints. His texts usually are very accurate, are they not?

With best regards and renewed thanks to you both,

Believe me,
Ever sincerely yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

LETTER CXXXVII

To Edmund Gosse

Holmwood,
October 29th, [1876].

My dear Gosse,

A New Trick to Cheat the Devil (published 1639) is by Robt. Davenport, author of *The City Nightcap* and *King John and Matilda.* I have not read it, but I remember an article on R. D. in the *Retrospective Review* (1st series) which praises it briefly but warmly.

I need not say that Marzials is most welcome to publish his music to (and with) any words of mine. What are his four chosen pieces? I should like to see and hear them.

I am better, but hardly strong yet, and fear my Encyclopædic article on Congreve, just accom-

plished with painful labour, will prove wretchedly inadequate.

With best regards to you both,
Ever sincerely yours,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

This is badly enough written to pass for an autograph of Shakespeare. I have to catch the early and only "Sabbath" post.

LETTER CXXXVIII

To JOHN CHURTON COLLINS

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
December 11th, 1876.

MY DEAR COLLINS,

Thank you sincerely (*ex imo corde*, as my master Victor Hugo once began a letter to me unworthy, with a most tremendous dash under the words) for so high a compliment and one that I shall always prize so highly as the dedication of Tourneur. Nothing could have given me more pleasure, whether on private grounds as your friend, or on public grounds as a lover and student of Cyril Tourner and all his kind from the ripe age of twelve, at which I first read *The Revenger's*

Tragedy in my tutor's Dodsley at Eton (which he was actually kind enough to entrust to such a small boy) with infinite edification, and such profit that to the utter neglect of my school work, to say nothing of my duties as a fag, I forthwith wrote a tragedy of which I have utterly forgotten the very name (having had the sense at sixteen to burn it together with every other scrap of MS. I had in the world), but into which I do remember that, with ingenuity worthy of a better cause, I had contrived to pack twice as many rapes and about three times as many murders as are contained in the model, which is not noticeably or exceptionally deficient in such incidents. It must have been a sweet work, and full of the tender and visionary innocence of childhood's unsullied fancy.

I am sorry my good friend Mr. Grosart's annotations have proved on revision so barren of good results—but, of course, I knew he was much more of an enthusiast and bookworm than a critic. But his good will and ardour are (as Ruskin would say) very precious to me.

I have sent (but this is a *dead* secret, which I confided as yet to no soul alive) a ballad of Chivalry to *The Pall Mall Gazette* without my name—subject "The Quest of Sir Bright de Brummagem" against the heathen dogs who worship Mahomet and Termagaunt, and pollute

the Holy Sepulchre of his (Sir B.'s) Blessed Lord. I wonder if they will put it in![1]

Ever yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXXXIX

To JOHN H. INGRAM

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
December 22nd, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for the excellent photograph I have just received and slipped into my copy of the French *Raven*,[2] according to your happy suggestion. I shall be anxious to see the Baltimore volume.[3] That of New York I should also for other reasons be curious to see, on account, namely, of the very blunders you mention.

[1] The Editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette* did *not* "put it in." This *Ballad of Bulgarie* remained in manuscript until 1893, when it was privately printed, in an edition of twenty-five copies, with a prefatory note by Mr. Edmund Gosse.

[2] *The Raven*, translated into French by Mallarmé, and illustrated by Manet.

[3] The Edgar Poe Baltimore Memorial Volume, 1877, for which Tennyson, Swinburne, and others, wrote letters of sympathy.

I do not remember either my own remark on "horrors of death," or your comment on it—certainly nothing whatever on your part can I remember which could have offended one by any note of flippancy.

I have only seen the first volume of Mr. Forman's *Shelley*, which was sent to me without a word of explanation, and re-demanded in a no less inexplicable fashion, by that seemingly rather singular person the editor of *The Academy*.[1] I was equally obliged by the gift and interested by the perusal of your article on "Politian."

Ever yours truly,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXL

TO THOMAS PURNELL

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
December 27th, 1876.

MY DEAR PURNELL,

On receipt of your letter this morning I regret to say our mutual friend of past years, Mrs. H. Manners, was taken with strong hysterics. Her 'owls, like those of the late Mr. Harris when his first was shown him in the arms of

[1] The late Dr. Appleton.

Mrs. Gamp, was organs. "If," she said, "if poor Horace her lamented lord had lived to see this day, he would have been a proud and happy man. *He*," she said, with acrimonious emphasis, "always believed in my genius as a novelist, the *others*" (too evidently and pointedly alluding to my unoffending self) "never did." Nevertheless our fair friend wishes to know what, if anything she would under the circumstances get for her immortal work, for the mere fame which might accrue to her from its publication I have her own authority for saying that she does not care a damn. She wishes to know the name and something more of the nature and style of the proposed magazine. She added some allusions to editors of journals, publishers, and others, couched in terms more familiar to the tongue or pen of Mr. Gladstone than (I am happy to say) to mine. Suffice it to say the adjectives generally had some reference to blood, and the substantives to the interesting natives of the suffering Christian province of Bulgaria. "No B.B.," she was pleased to assert (*not* I believe meaning Bashi Bazouk) "should have the first fruits of her youth and early married life, except for Cash paid down on the Nail, and on the delivery or the appearance of each division of the work." As an honest woman she cannot think at her age of giving herself for nothing to a total stranger, even tho' introduced by so

old a friend as yourself; nor, as a moral man, can I conscientiously recommend her to do so.[1]

I send you a Ballad[2] (anonymous) which was sent some three weeks since to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and has received no notice. If the *Globe*, or any other respectable Anti-Russian paper that you know of, would care to publish it without the author's name, I am at liberty to say it is at the service of such papers.

Ever yours,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXLI

To JOHN H. INGRAM

Holmwood,
Shiplake,
Henley-on-Thames.
December 28th, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR,

A thousand thanks for the Baltimore Memorial, which you have been kind enough to accept the trouble of forwarding to me. Too

[1] This amusing letter refers to the terms suggested for the publication of *A Year's Letters, by Mrs. Horace Manners.* The novel duly appeared in *The Tatler*, Vol. 2, from August to December, 1877. In 1905 it was republished in volume form under the amended title *Love's Cross-Currents. The Tatler* was edited by Robert Francillon.

[2] *The Ballad of Bulgarie.*

much of your name the book cannot possibly contain; for too much of thanks cannot be paid by Poe's admirers to the first adequate and thoroughly serviceable champion of his character and memory.

Ever yours truly,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXLII

To THOMAS PURNELL

Holmwood.
January 8th, [1877].

MY DEAR PURNELL,

You hardly make such allowance as might be expected from a chivalrous gentleman for the weakness of sex, and the naturally tremulous susceptibilities of a desolate widow who has to consider at once the credit of her late lord's name and the prospects of her orphan child. I must await at least the reply of a friend whose advice in the matter I have asked on her behalf; but as soon as ever I receive his opinion I will let you know my decision without a day's avoidable delay.

Ever yours,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXLIII

To Thomas Purnell

January 27th, [1877].

I hesitate to express my full feeling about the book (*Mrs. H. M.'s Letters*), lest the simplest expression would seem inflated. To me it appears an almost consummate piece of art, among English analytical novels of our age only rivalled by *The Scarlet Letter*. The surface is a sparkling picture of a phase of society with which the writer is evidently familiar. But how many will detect the darts of satire in every page, and the lurid scorn that runs through the whole?—its subtlety, humour, and intense pathos are out of the ken of the British public—your leading characters and plot, which seems a very natural one, are wholly original. Lady Midhurst is as strikingly English as Madame de Merteuil is French. The boys are both good fellows. Clara is *sui generis*—but I shall not say what I think of that young woman. As for the Professor I only hope some five or six readers may see the book with such eyes as his.

You must desire the printers to be very careful to return the manuscript without erasing the pencilled notes and marks in *green*, made by Nichol on the margins—as I particularly

want to keep them for my own reference. Of course they will not be stupid enough either to *print* them or to rule them out. The same caution applies to the passages crossed out or otherwise marked for omission—but on no account, if you please, to be destroyed or obliterated. And, as aforesaid, the MS., sheet for sheet, must accompany each proof.

Hoping to hear from you by return of post, I remain with all good wishes for your undertaking and yourself.

Ever yours,
A. C. Swinburne.

P.S.—Before I see Mrs. Horace into the London express I must ask you to return my ballad of Bulgaria, which I want for my own immediate use and present satisfaction—as there is apparently no place for it in London. As soon as you have sent it, with a word of reply to this note, Mrs. H. M. (as aforesaid) will have the honour, etc.

As to *The Ballad of Bulgarie*, if truth must be told, having of course resigned all expectation of seeing it in London type, I wanted to send it to Nichol for his private reading—and as I have not another copy of course I want the only one extant returned for that purpose. I am delighted to hear that Dilke liked it. If

nothing else will do, I must print it on a fly-sheet in the old black letter ballad fashion by way of appendix to my *Note on the Muscovite Crusade*. I wonder if this could really be done with a comic head and tail piece, and whether if so published it would pay?

I can't get you here a copy of Nichol's Tables,[1] nor spare my own, but no doubt you can easily borrow one; if you can you will really do me and him a good turn by striking a stroke in their defence. The publisher is James Maclehose, 61, Vincent Street, Glasgow, publisher to the University.

A propos—of course there will be no *illustrations* to the *Letters*. I don't think Mrs. H. M.'s life or reason could be counted on to withstand the shock of seeing her text adorned by the devices of the comic British Artist. Indeed, between ourselves, she has mentioned to me in confidence that she will be damned if she stands it; and indeed I think she will be.

[1] Tables of *European History, Literature, Science, and Art.* A fifth edition was published by Dr. W. R. Jack in 1909.

LETTER CXLIV

To Thomas Purnell

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
Feb. 2nd, 1877.

My dear Purnell,

Mrs. H. Manners desires me to say that having returned from a business excursion from Scotland with renewed health and greatly fortified (thank God !) in spirits, she will do herself the honour of waiting on you in person (that is, not in the flesh, but in the spirit—and in MS.) at any time you may appoint.

I have only one thing in the way of business to say, and that seriously, which I am sure you will take as it is meant, in earnest, and without offence. I need not say what, on sending the MS. for his revision to the oldest friend I have, I said concerning your proposal, that it would give me real pleasure if I could by joining your enterprise thus under the rose be of any service to an undertaking presided over by a friend like yourself, to whose good offices with Karl Blind I am directly indebted for the highest honour of my life and one of its greatest and purest pleasures, my presentation to Mazzini. At the same time, it implies no impeachment to my confidence in your own good taste and

sense if I say as between ourselves that but for my personal knowledge of you I should certainly hesitate—or rather, to be quite frank, I should at once decline—to be concerned in any way with anything in the nature of a "satirical journal" especially if there was any breath or hint in the matter of any such connection or reference as you mention, in earnest or in fun, for satirical or for social purposes, with the name or shadow of the name of any "scion of royalty." From the *Tomahawk* down to the *Hornet*, I understand such papers of late years have always sooner or later gone into ways on which I should feel it impossible for a gentleman to keep them company without forfeiting his self-respect. As my friend Watts knows, I was urgently solicited to send some (or any) contribution to *Vanity Fair* and name (if I remember right) my own terms. I never did, or thought of doing so; and was very glad I had not, when there appeared in its columns a most infamously insolent attack on one of my best friends, the Master of Balliol. Nothing I then felt, could have been more painful or injurious to me than the consciousness of ever having had the very slightest connection with such a paper, however popular or profitable the connection might have been; and Watts was most strongly of the same mind. I should think it must be *very* difficult for the conductor

of such an enterprise to be so perfectly sure of all his contributors, or to keep so close and constant a watch on them as to feel absolutely certain that nothing unworthy (in any sense) of a gentleman can ever creep or slip into his columns.

It would be a mere impertinence to reassure you of my confidence in yourself ; but I think it necessary to say this much before signing myself in haste

Ever yours,
A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXLV

To THOMAS PURNELL

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
February 7th, [1877]

MY DEAR PURNELL,

I would, as you desire, send Mrs. Horace by this post, but my regard for appearance forbids me to let a lady with whom I was *once* on terms of some intimacy—need I add that such terms were purely Platonic ?—travel by rail *en deshabille.* In other words I must finish reading the MS. through and correcting

the transcriber's errors, cancelling or adding a word or two when necessary, etc., before sending it on. It will save time in the long run not to leave all revision and correction to the last minute. In a day or two more I hope to finish this task, and will then direct the parcel to the new address you give me. I was sure you would receive my last note in the same friendly spirit and sense as I wrote it.

As to the poor little invalid R. H.[1] I hear everybody I know who knows him, among them the most ferocious and thorough-going young republicans at Oxford, who have succeeded to my place and that of my contemporary revolutionists there, speak well of him as a thoroughly nice boy, modest and simple and gentle, devoted to books and poetry, without pretence or affectation. So don't you, being yourself a gentleman, be a party in any private or public way to any taking of his poor little innocent name in vain, which would be a very blackguardly and stupid proceeding, worthy only of Yates and Co.

When I was at Oxford, on a visit to the Master of Balliol, Prince Leopold hearing of it posted off at once to call on him, for the chance (as afterwards came out) of meeting me. But the Fates crossed his aspirations, for I was out, and when I returned the call—as of course was

[1] H.R.H. Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany.

necessary, in Mr. Jowett's company—*he* was out. Considering what the boy must have known of my opinions, it shewed a genuine honest youthful interest in Art and Letters to go out of his way on the chance of meeting a poet who has as little claim to friendly advances on the part of a Prince Royal, as even to the reversion of the post of Poet Laureate.

Mind when I send *Mrs. H. M.* you acknowledge her safe arrival *by* return of post, and of course the MS. must *always* accompany the proofs sent to me in due progress.

Yours ever,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXLVI

To THOMAS PURNELL

Holmwood,
Henley-on-Thames.
February 11th, [1877].

MY DEAR PURNELL,

Mrs. Horace having returned from her trip and been carefully revised—a few specks brushed from her garments, and a drop or two of strengthening medicine administered to the

fair traveller—she will do herself the distinguished honour of waiting on you without further delay—awaiting only a line to acknowledge the receipt of this note and also of my last in re H.R.H. etc., etc. The vanity so natural and pardonable to her sex cannot refrain from the indulgence of sending you by my hands this extract from the remarks made on her MS. by the oldest and best friend I have in the world, Professor Nichol of Glasgow (to whose Historic Tables—a great monument of general research and the scholarlike faculties of harmonising order and masterly composition, most viciously and with deliberate unfairness attacked and miscriticised in the *Saturday Review* and the *Academy* —it would give me infinite satisfaction if I could be the means of getting any modicum of justice done through the press—a task in which I should feel truly obliged and very grateful for any furtherance).

LETTER CXLVII

To Thomas Purnell

Holmwood.
February 15th, 1877.

My dear Purnell,

By the same post which brings you this note the relict of the late H. Manners, Esq. (Attaché to the Mesopotamian Embassy at the time of the overthrow of the Gladstonian dynasty in Bulgaria), will have the honour of waiting on her early friend and patron—a word from whom, in acknowledgment of her safe arrival, will much relieve my mind.

I will not trouble you or myself with any "damnable iteration" of my former remarks on the conduct of your project, but I think it as well to give you a hint of the light in which, after so many ventures of (seemingly) the same kind have been of late years made, not by gentlemen and men of honour as well as of letters, but by blackguards who feed on the filth they make and the droppings of their own foul pens, any new enterprise of this nature is *inevitably* liable to be looked upon by perfectly unprejudiced and honourable men, unless and until full proof is given by the practical conduct of it that its conductors and contributors are men with whom a gentleman need be neither afraid nor ashamed to

associate. A friend, who (I must premise) writes of yourself personally in a thoroughly friendly tone and spirit and without a word or hint that could give pain or offence, mentions that you have been asking whether I would send you something for a "comic" print *à la Hornet* which you are starting; and of course, very naturally under the circumstances, goes on to say that he knows I shall not—cannot—dream of connecting myself in any way with such a venture. And with *such* a venture most assuredly I should not and could not dream of connecting myself in *any* way. But I will not allow myself to fear that I run any risk of such degradation by giving my hand to an old friend to whose good offices I am, and have always been, glad and proud to acknowledge myself indebted for the highest honour and the purest happiness of my whole life—that of having been presented by Carl Blind to Joseph Mazzini. In remembrance of which occasion I am, and must always be, as I remember anything on earth,

My dear Purnell,

Truly and most gratefully yours,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

LETTER CXLVIII

To Mr. Thomas Purnell

Holmwood,
February 23rd, [1877].

My dear Purnell,

Thanks for your note which is reassuring so far. As I told you before, I have full confidence in your good feeling and sense of the right thing—but the report implied (or so understood — perhaps misunderstood — by me, tho' by no fault of mine) as to the title, was to say the least, startling. But you should know better than I, having more years experience how false reports get about, and that the one sure way to meet and suppress them is to go straight to the root of the matter and enquire at the fountain head (excuse the mixture of metaphor, in which I do not usually indulge). Having done so, I am quite reassured at your title—only it implies no scandalous connection with Royalty, as Mrs. Manners (who you know is something of a prude—as Balzac said of George Sand ! ! ! ! ! !) could not think of allowing her daughters—if she had any—to be presented at Marlborough House after the disclosures in the Mordaunt divorce case long ago. Indeed she has never set foot there herself since then. You don't mention one thing (or rather two) which

I am anxious to know—what is to be the shape, cost, and date of recurrence—weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. Tenth-daily would be something new, and you might call it the *Decade* (French Revolutionary or the *Tithe* (clerical). The Marlborough would not be a bad name if it didn't suggest to me the old, old song of *Marlbro' s'en va-t- en guerre ? !* You must excuse the reminiscence and believe me

Yours ever,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

By this time I dare say you will have received my friend Nichol's Tables—as I told him of your friendly purpose—and he responded in warm terms—saying he should send them to you direct, and at once. I hope some time this year —if the gods are decently propitious he may meet you (as he wishes) in my chambers (we may all have a friendly and jocund evening together).

END OF VOL. I.

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p 15: "Edie"
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82 vexation
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